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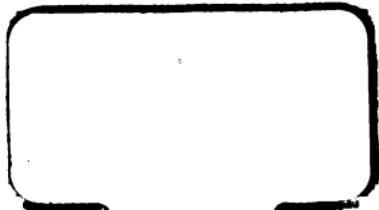
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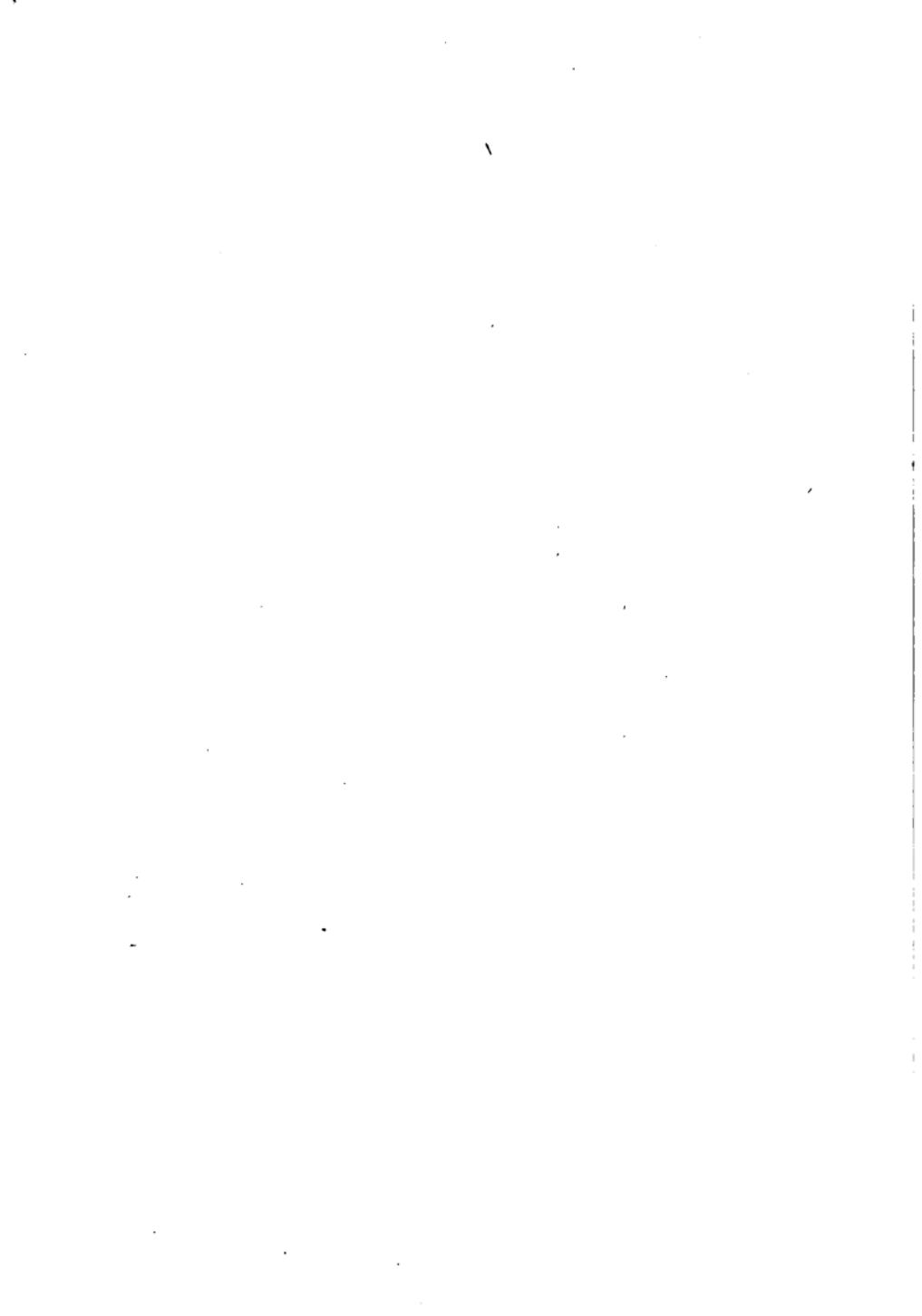
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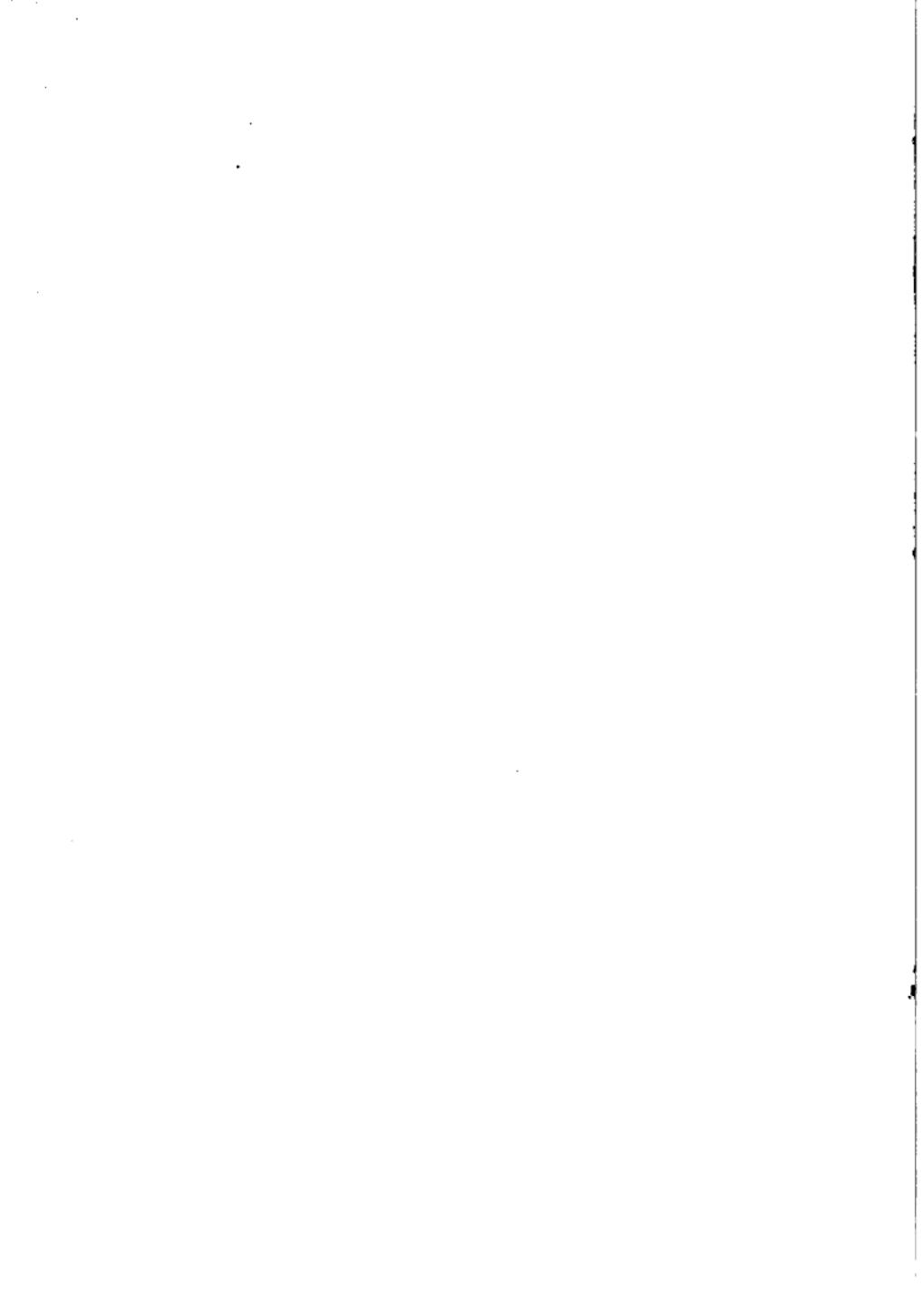
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Miss Mary Mc Wilson









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P R E J U D G E D

2

BY

FLORENCE MONTGOMERY,

AUTHOR OF

"MISUNDERSTOOD," "SEAFORTH," "COLONEL NORTON,"

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P R E J U D G E D.



P R E J U D G E D.

CHAPTER I.

YES—he was a tiresome man.

Of that Blanche Talbot was certain before she had been many hours in the hotel,—a tiresome, talking man.

He sat at the head of the *table d'hôte*, and poured forth, as it seemed to her, a ceaseless stream of conversation to anyone who would listen to him.

She was thankful that she and her friend, being new-comers, were not near him, so that they could not be included in his circle.

He had evidently been some time in the hotel, for he seemed to be friends with everybody, foreigners and English alike.

And, of all horrors, he wore large blue goggles, which he did not remove even at dinner.

Blanche Talbot and her friend and chaperon, Lady Mary Fitzroy, had only just arrived. The latter had been ill, and was ordered to drink the waters at F——.

Her husband could not come with her, and Blanche had been invited to do so, just as a companion.

It was quite a new experience to her to come to a foreign watering-place, or indeed abroad at all.

Her lines had not as yet been laid in these kinds of places. She had lived rather in a groove hitherto. Her own country home, then London for the season, and a few visits in the autumn, had represented her life since she had grown up.

So she had much looked forward to the change and novelty.

As far as it had gone, however, she had been rather disappointed.

She had fancied, as so many people do, that

she would be sure to meet all sorts of delightful people abroad, find old friends, and make many new ones. And now, as she sat at the *table d'hôte*, and looked round her, she realised not only that she did not know anyone there, but that the very last thing she would desire would be to do so!

There were a few of what she mentally called "very second-rate-looking English ladies;" some Spaniards, a German family, a great many French, and a sprinkling of Americans. The only Englishman in the hotel was the one in question; and on him her young judgment was already passed. She began to realise that her looked-forward-to visit to F—— would be rather flat. However, she was an intelligent girl, and full of resources. She had brought plenty of books with her, and her drawing materials; so would be at no loss for occupation. She was not altogether indisposed for a little quiet, having just been through a London season; and, even without other society, she would find her friend's companionship enough.

After all it was only for three weeks, and then her brother was to come and join her, and

they were to go for a little tour together, Lady Mary returning home.

Blanche was not going through the "course" herself, for her vigorous youth and health needed no such measures; but she intended to lead the watering-place life, to get up early, and do as the rest did; to walk up and down between the "glasses," and, in short, to do exactly as Lady Mary would have to do.

Accordingly, the morning after their arrival, she was up with the lark and out with her friend.

Crowds were doing the same; but, as had been the case last night at the *table d'hôte*, there was not a face they had either of them seen before.

The "talking man" was drinking the waters like the rest, and, as it seemed to Blanche, was to be met with at every turn. To add to his other failings, he walked with a peculiar gait, a sort of unsteadiness almost amounting to lameness; and to Blanche this was a particular offence. Of all things she hated a limp. She always thought it gave a most dilapidated aspect. The person thus afflicted became the "man with a

limp" at once, and lost all individuality. He leaned rather heavily on the stick in his right hand, giving the effect of one shoulder being higher than the other.

They returned to their hotel, and Blanche went up to her bedroom to take off her hat. This took her a few minutes, and then she went into the sitting-room.

It was empty, and finding Lady Mary's bedroom also untenanted, Blanche realised that her friend had not followed her upstairs, as she imagined. Where could she be?

Presently through the open window she heard talking in the garden below, and the same voice which had annoyed her last night distinctly sounding above the rest. She muttered an impatient exclamation, and went to the window to shut it.

Yes! there he was, sitting on a garden seat "holding forth" to his neighbours. She quickly withdrew for fear he might look up.

But the room got so hot after she had shut the window that she was obliged to go and open it again.

Peeping cautiously through the Venetian blinds,

she saw, to her great annoyance, that Lady Mary was out there, and on the very same seat!

Blanche felt quite injured. Yes, there she was, sitting by him, talking to him, and evidently making herself most agreeable.

Blanche Talbot was exclusive; that word just described her. So was the brother she expected at F——. So were all her family.

She began to wish Lady Mary were a little more so. She was too much inclined, Blanche thought, to make friends with everybody: too friendly and sociable, in short, to suit Blanche's tastes. She had observed this more than once since they had come abroad. But what could she do? Lady Mary was of course older and more experienced than she was; she stood to her in the position of the chaperoned to the chaperon, the girl to the married woman. It was not her place to remonstrate, or in any way to take the lead.

Moreover, Lady Mary, good-natured as she was, was not, as Blanche knew, a person to be dictated to.

She therefore did her best to conceal and

overcome her annoyance, when, in a few minutes, Lady Mary got up from the seat and came towards the hotel, shortly afterwards entering the sitting-room, asking Blanche, as she did so, if the English post had come in, and if there were any letters for her.

“Yes—two,” Blanche answered, pointing to the table. “One in a child’s handwriting.”

“Ah! from Harry—bless his little heart!” said the fond mother, sinking down in her chair, with a long breath of pleasure and satisfaction. And soon she was completely engrossed in her letters from home. It was the first time she had ever been so far away from her husband and children.

There would be nothing to be got out of her now for some time, as Blanche knew; so she went and sat by the window to get some air, for it was getting hotter and hotter as the morning wore on. She settled herself so that she could see what was going on in the hotel garden, and yet not be seen.

There that man was still—sitting where Lady Mary had left him, but his voice merci-

fully hushed for the time, as he had no one to talk to.

But this did not last long.

“Good-morning, Mrs. ——!” “Good-morning, Miss ——!” he called out presently, taking off his hat to some of the hotel ladies who were beginning by degrees to appear in the garden. They were two of the ladies Blanche had condemned as “very second-rate” English; but he seemed delighted to see them, and made room for them on the seat.

“Anyone does,” thought Blanche, watching all this from her coign of vantage—“they are just the same to him as Mary.”

“Ah! *bon jour, mes petites demoiselles!*” he called out again, as two little French girls came running up to him.

The children laughed and chatted to him, and he seemed to throw himself thoroughly into their conversation, and to enter into their enjoyment.

“Blanche dear,” said Lady Mary when she had finished her letters, “I am going to write for the post now, and in about an hour I shall be

going to my bath. What shall you do while I am gone?"

"Oh! I shall read," she answered, "or perhaps draw."

"If you read," said Lady Mary, "I should advise you to go and sit in the garden with your book, instead of remaining in this hot room. It is delicious out there under the trees."

"Oh! I think I would rather stay here," answered Blanche, "till you come back again. There are a whole lot of hotel people out there."

"There will be nobody soon, because everyone will be going to their bath in about an hour," rejoined Lady Mary. "However, do as you like best. That is rather an agreeable man," she added. "He has been talking very pleasantly out in the garden, and he seems to have plenty to say."

"He does indeed!" Blanche could not help saying. "He never seems to cease for a moment."

"A pleasant chat whiles away the time now

and then," said Lady Mary, as she left the room.

An hour passed. Blanche wrote her letters—by which time it was eleven o'clock, and Lady Mary went off to her bath.

After she was gone, the little room got so intolerably hot, that Blanche, seeing the garden was empty, took her friend's advice, put on a shady hat, and went out with her book.

She sat there a long time, absorbed in her reading; when suddenly the offending voice fell upon her ear again—“*Bon jour, Madame!*”

She started, and, looking up, saw her “*bête noire*” advancing; but he was not speaking to her, as had been her first indignant impression, but to a French lady who was entering the garden at the same time.

Both he and the lady sat down on some chairs close by. Blanche kept her eyes fixed on her book. She was, nevertheless, distracted after a time by their conversation,—struck, moreover, by the excellent French he spoke, a point in which she herself, to her great regret, was rather deficient.

"I suppose," she said to herself, unwilling to allow him the advantage which superiority in any direction naturally gives one person over another, "I suppose he is one of those 'out-at-elbows' men one hears about, who is obliged to live abroad, and that therefrom he has become fluent in the language. He may be a gambler or some disreputable person of that sort. Those blue goggles may be some kind of disguise. Who knows? I do hope Mary will not continue her acquaintance with him."

Just at this moment she happened to look up, and met the goggles fixed full upon her. Highly indignant, she looked down again at her book: too soon to see that the gaze had been removed the moment it became patent that it was observed.

Soon after she rose from her seat, and moved with rather a stately step towards the hotel.

"*Qui donc!*" she heard the French lady ask.

"*Une Anglaise,*" was the answer.

"*Bien clair!*" laughed the other. "*Elle se nomme?*"

To her surprise he answered, "*Je ne sais pas.*"

He was not such a gossip after all! And she was even a little surprised, if not (such is the contrariness of human nature!) a little mortified, that he had not taken the trouble to enquire who she was.

"*Elle a l'air bien intelligente,*" she heard him add in a low voice. And somehow she did not feel so annoyed as she would have done a few moments before.

Lady Mary returned from her baths, and after making a fresh toilette, she and Blanche went down to *déjeuner*. They passed him just coming in from the garden: he took off his hat to Lady Mary; but Blanche studiously kept her head turned away, so as not by any means to run the risk of being included in the acquaintance.

At dinner that evening, a family having left in the morning, they found themselves, to Blanche's disgust, several places nearer the top of the table, and within earshot of his conversation, though not near enough to join; and she looked forward with dismay to the time when departures from the hotel should

bring them so near him as to make it impossible not to form part of his circle. The day might arrive when she and Lady Mary would be at his side.

No, by the way—she remembered that Lady Mary intended removing into “appartments” as soon as she heard of any. It was, however, a remote chance, as they were very scarce this year, and for the next day or two they were not likely to hear of any. Still, it would take them quite that time to reach his immediate neighbourhood. So for the present, at anyrate, they were safe.

Lady Mary had a German lady next her, with whom she was soon in conversation; and Blanche began to find it rather dull.

She could not get her friend’s attention for a moment, so bent was Lady Mary on improving the chance for gaining fluency in German. And on Blanche’s other side was a French child, who kept on staring at her in a most embarrassing manner. Invain did she try to escape from the little boy’s fixed scrutiny. To get away from it she looked round the table, but now incurred the added danger of catch-

ing her "*bête noire's*" eye, and of his perhaps addressing her. So she found it safest to look down at her plate, and listen to what was going on around her.

Fragments of his conversation every now and then reached her.

No, she said to herself, conversation she could not call it. It was a monologue—a ceaseless stream. Story after story came in quick succession.

But everyone else seemed delighted; and rounds of applause followed one of his stories, given in excellent French.

Then, seeing that one or two of those near him did not understand, he suddenly turned to English; and the next story he told was so full of real humour that Blanche herself, greatly to her annoyance, could not repress a smile.

No doubt he was very agreeable, and the moment he stopped talking the table seemed silent and dull.

Blanche allowed this to herself, for she was honest, though intolerant. She wished dinner was over. She was longing to get out into the air. The room was hot, and she was bored.

Happening to look round, she was annoyed to find the child's eyes fixed upon her once more with that embarrassing stare; and in a moment, she hardly knew how, she felt the "talking man" had observed her annoyance, and the quarter from which it came.

"*Vous sortez ce soir, mon ami?*" he said, suddenly addressing the little boy.

The child turned towards him and answered his question, which resulted in a little *tête-à-tête* between them for some minutes. Blanche experienced great relief by the distraction of the little boy's attention, though she was annoyed at the source from which her relief came, and the means by which she enjoyed it.

"He is trying to make acquaintance with me," she said to herself, "and I will not be led into knowing him—that I am quite determined!"

Lady Mary now turned to her, and began to talk; and, shortly after, dinner came to an end, and they went upstairs to put on their things.

Voices outside in the garden. There they were, drinking their coffee at little tables, and

chatting hard again—the one voice, as usual, above the rest.

“Don’t you want any coffee, Blanche, dear?” said Lady Mary, as they passed downstairs.

“Oh, no, thank-you,” said Blanche hastily. “Do let us start for the band.”

Which they accordingly did; and lovely it was, sitting there in the fading light, listening to the strains of the stringed instruments.

Blanche fell into a day-dream as she sat; and Lady Mary’s thoughts floated home on the wings of the music. She was in fancy stooping over sundry little white beds, and bestowing soft kisses on sundry little sleeping faces.

“I wonder what that poor, lonely man is doing,” she said, when the piece came to an end.

“What poor, lonely man?” asked Blanche quickly.

“My poor, deserted husband,” said Lady Mary. “It is a morning sitting to-day, and he will have no “House” to go to. I am thinking how lost he will be without me. Perhaps,” she mused, “he will go out of town for the night, and have a pull on the river somewhere.

I hope so, for he is rather overworked just now, with his very close attendance at the House." She sighed.

"Are you depressed by the music?" asked Blanche.

"No, not exactly, only a little homesick. Talk to me, Blanche, and amuse me. Heigho! I wish someone would come and distract my thoughts."

Just at that moment, to Blanche's dismay, there fell upon her ear in the silence the sound of the offending voice; and the next moment the now well-known figure passed, in company with some Frenchmen.

"I wish he had stopped," said Lady Mary; "he is an agreeable man, and he told some excellent stories at dinner."

Blanche made no answer; and the two ladies sank again into reverie, as the strains of the band once more claimed their attention.

When they came to an end, Blanche perceived that her enemy was standing not far off.

Was it him? There was some change in the face. Dim as the light was, she saw there

was a change of some sort, and a change which was an improvement.

He seemed quite a different man for the moment.

Lady Mary and Blanche walked home almost in silence under the starlit sky. The music had made them thoughtful, and neither was inclined to talk. Blanche was conscious, in the stillness, of the sound of a firm but slightly uneven tread behind them all the way, and was much afraid they might be overtaken and joined before they reached the hotel.

But this did not happen until they had got to the door.

Then he bowed to Lady Mary, and wished her good-night. Blanche averted her eyes and gave him no chance of including her in the salutation. Half ashamed the next moment, she raised them to him.

He was already turning away; but in that momentary glance she suddenly realised what it was that had so changed his appearance.

He had taken off his blue goggles!

Yes, the goggles were gone—and the result was that she was conscious, in the light of the

lamp over the hotel door, which fell full upon his face, of the glance of a pair of singularly beautiful brown eyes, from which shone such a pleasant expression that it seemed to illumine and transform his whole countenance.

CHAPTER II.

BLANCHE TALBOT woke the next morning with a certain feeling of curiosity about their hotel acquaintance; and the thought of meeting him again in broad daylight was not altogether without interest.

She was an artist in her small way; and that bright, pleasant expression had photographed itself in her mind's eye.

She found Lady Mary full of a re-arrangement of the day, so that they should get as much time in the morning for reading and other occupations as was feasible with the labours of baths and water-drinking to get through. She intended, she said, to go earlier to the waters than she had done yesterday, and to her bath later: giving thus more time between the two events for rest and reading at home.

Accordingly they found themselves astir rather

sooner than the ordinary run of water-drinkers; and as Blanche and Lady Mary walked up and down "between the glasses," they met fewer people than they had done the day before.

Lady Mary remarked on the advantage of having the place more to themselves, and not having to wait so long for her glass at the wells; but Blanche did not concur in this opinion so heartily as she would have done yesterday.

For among others conspicuous for their absence was the "talking man." He was neither to be seen on the promenade, nor on the way back to the hotel. They had managed somehow by their new arrangement to miss him altogether; so she was not able to gratify her newly-awakened curiosity.

The interval between their return home and Lady Mary's departure for her bath was fully occupied.

Blanche began a sketch of the latter as she lay on the sofa, reading—which, if successful, was to be a present to Lady Mary's husband. Blanche had an unusually good eye for a like-

ness, besides having a great deal of artistic talent. She got thoroughly engrossed in her drawing, and the morning slipped quickly away.

They were rather late for *déjeuner*; and the table, with the exception of their own two vacant places, was quite full when they entered the salle.

Blanche glanced at the head of the table, and any illusion she might have had at once fled away.

There he sat, looking exactly as he had done the first night: blue goggles and all.

He was once more the man who had been so antipathetic to her on the evening of her arrival.

Nevertheless, her attention was once or twice arrested by what he was saying to his immediate neighbours, though she could only catch a sentence now and then. He entered presently into what was apparently a very engrossing conversation with an elderly man next him: judging, that is, by the expression of the elderly man's face—for he had slightly lowered his voice and she could not catch a word. She almost wished she could, as the talk seemed

to be so very interesting. Sitting silent, with a Dutchman next her, she was having a very dull *déjeuner*, for Lady Mary was heart and soul in the German lady, and there was not a word to be got out of her.

From the scraps of talk around, Blanche by-and-by gathered that there were to be several departures from the hotel that afternoon. Her fears, therefore, of finding her own and Lady Mary's seats nearer to the top of the table seemed to be within measurable distance of realisation.

But the thought did not fill her with the disgust she had anticipated. She had rather a desire to see him a little nearer, and to discover whether any trace of his evening expression was to be seen through those horrible goggles or not, or whether the transformation of countenance was not partly due to the misleading effect of the half-light of the gardens, or the flickering glimmer of the hotel lamp.

Besides, he was the only person at the table who ever said anything worth listening to.

A French lady was presently heard enquir-

ing of the company generally what had become of an American who had dined there the night before; but no one appeared to be able to give her any information.

There was an old English lady who seemed to be quite alone, sitting opposite the Frenchwoman who had made the enquiry.

She now looked up, and addressed her across the table.

“Elly-party-per-Parry,” she said.

“Pardon?” said the puzzled Frenchwoman, with knitted brows and bewildered aspect.

“Elly-party-per-Parry,” repeated the old lady.

The French lady was utterly unable to decipher the meaning of the sentence. There was a slight titter from one corner of the table. Matters were getting desperate, when the “Man” took in the position of affairs, threw himself into the breach, and came to the rescue of his poor old countrywoman.

“Ah! ~~ve~~ment,” he said in a matter-of-fact tone, “*elle est partie pour Paris!*”

“Oui, Monsieur.”

“A—a—h!” said the foreigner, as if awaking from a confused dream. “A—h! *Elle est partie*

pour Paris! Ah-ha! Et quand est-elle partie, Madame?"

"Elly-party-se-matting, Mydamn."

Again knitted brows and a slight hesitation on the part of the French lady. Another titter from the corner of the table.

He intervened again.

"Ah! *elle est partie ce matin*," he said, in the same tone he had used before.

The whole matter was thus cleared up: the French lady thanked the English one for her information; and everyone went on talking as if there had been no interruption.

Somehow Blanche, when she got upstairs, found herself thinking of an old story she had not thought of for years, which she had often been told when a child, of a lady whose untutored guest drank from the dessert-glass in which he was meant to dip his fingers; and who, on a titter being heard, immediately raised her own to her lips and did what he had done.

That hostess had always been instanced to Blanche by her mother as an example of high-bred courtesy and refinement of feeling.

Lady Mary and Blanche took such a long drive that afternoon that they saw no more of any of their hotel acquaintances; and, indeed, the former had to forego her evening glass of water, for they only returned in time to make a hurried toilette, and go down at once to dinner.

Blanche saw directly they entered the dining-room that their places were very much nearer the top of the table; and that, therefore, they were now so completely within the radius of her "*bête noire's*" circle that any attempt to ignore his close vicinity could only be accomplished by absolute rudeness.

She mentally yielded to the situation, and prepared—not altogether unwillingly—to accept its development.

But his place was vacant.

Dinner began, and proceeded some way, but still he did not appear.

Anxious glances were cast by more than one of the company towards the door, and his non-appearance was evidently a disappointment all round.

"Monsieur est en retard," she heard one say to the other.

But he did not come, and his place remained permanently vacant.

The dinner was a very dull one, and even Blanche felt she missed the cheerful conversation which emanated from the top of the table.

“*Monsieur est parti?*” she heard one lady ask the “*garçon*.”

And she found herself listening for the answer, and annoyed that she could not catch it.

After dinner she and Lady Mary went to the Jardins.

The same lovely band was discoursing the most attractive music, and they sat in the fading light, enjoying it even more than they had done the night before.

The Jardins were twinkling with little coloured lamps; every seat was occupied—and it was the very softest summer evening that could be imagined.

Blanche's eyes, absently following the moving groups of twos and threes walking up and down, passing and repassing every moment, presently lighted on an approaching

figure. No! Monsieur was *not* gone. Here he was.

When he saw the two ladies he took off his hat, with a pleasant smile; but the bow and the smile were both for Lady Mary.

"You deserted us to-night," she said, with the evident intention of stopping him.

He immediately took the hint.

"I dined at the 'Royale' for a change," he answered. "A very good *cuisine*! I should advise your trying it when you get tired of the *chef* at our hotel."

There was no vacant seat near, or the probability was he would have taken it. But the band now began its soft strains again, and he moved away, and seated himself at some distance.

"It is a pity there was no chair near," said Lady Mary, regretfully. "We might have had an interesting chat."

"Apparently it was not going to be very interesting," said Blanche. "All he seemed to talk about was the *cuisine* at the 'Royale.'"

"Really, Blanche," said Lady Mary, "what do you expect when a person starts a conver-

sation which only lasts a minute? You surely did not expect him to plunge at once into Kidd's 'Social Evolution'; or Balfour's 'Foundations of Belief'?"

"He might have begun with something more interesting than his dinner," said Blanche. "I do hate people talking about eating and drinking."

But later on, when—the band being over—Lady Mary and Blanche got up and went home, he joined them, and walked with them to the hotel; talking about the music they had been listening to, with a knowledge and an intelligent appreciation to which Blanche could not pretend.

They paused at the door under the hotel lamp as before, and, as he turned away, lifting his hat with a smiling "Good-night," his eyes fell upon Blanche, and she met again the same expression which had so photographed itself upon her recollection.

This time she did not avert her glance, but returned his bow and "Good-night"—though rather distantly, and with some remains of *hauteur*.

But when she gained her own bedroom and

began to undress, she was surprised and annoyed to find how the thought of that expression lingered. She could not get it out of her head. There was something so frank and open and pleasant about it. The eyes were so candid and fearless, and they looked at you straight, looked you through and through, with a glance which, though kind, was keen and penetrating.

Now Blanche admired candour, straightforwardness and fearlessness more than anything; they were her favourite qualities—more especially in a man.

As she sat brushing her hair, she was conscious of a mixture of feelings, which found vent at last in the almost irritably impatient expression, uttered aloud, "What a pity it is he wears those odious blue goggles!"

The routine the next morning was the same; the waters, and then the drawing and reading, and then Lady Mary's departure for her bath.

Blanche, as we said before, had a capital eye for a likeness; but still it was rash of her to linger as long as she did over her drawing after

her model was gone. It was surely a risk to go on for a full hour without it!

Lady Mary's returning footstep on the stair startled her; so engrossed was she with her work. And perhaps she thought her friend might say she was spoiling it by too much touching up, for she certainly rose rather hastily from her seat, and retired into her bedroom, drawing-block and all.

But the sketch which she put into her dressing-table drawer bore not the slightest resemblance to Lady Mary Fitzroy.

It was a rough, unfinished head of a man who might have been any age between twenty and forty, so vague and undefined were the features and the outline of the face. But the eyes were highly finished, and all the care and skill of the artist appeared to have been expended upon them.

They were bright brown eyes, with a remarkably intelligent and pleasant expression; candid, frank, fearless—and they looked at you straight out of the canvas with a glance at once kind and penetrating—looked you through and through. . . .

“Blanche! Where are you?” sounded Lady Mary’s voice from the next room—and Blanche hurried back.

Lady Mary was standing with the drawing of her own head in her hand.

“My dear!” she exclaimed, “I picked up your block on the floor, lying on its face. Your drawing will be quite spoilt!”

“Oh! it won’t hurt,” Blanche answered rather confusedly, as she took it from her friend’s hand. “I must have knocked it off the easel as I went out of the room just now in a hurry.”

She was quite unaware of having done so in her hasty exit of a few moments before. Neither was she aware of how long she had been occupied on the other drawing, so anxious had she been to throw upon the canvas the expression that lingered in her mind, before it should fade from her recollection.

“I have heard of some very nice ‘*appartements*,’” said Lady Mary. “They will be vacant to-day, and I think we will migrate into them to-morrow. It will be cosier than a hotel, and less monotonous. We can dine anywhere we like, and do our own housekeeping for our other

meals, which will be rather amusing. I know *you* will like it better," she added. "You look horribly bored at the *table d'hôte*, and so you will prefer this plan."

But Blanche was not sure she did. She felt as if the new arrangement had a certain flatness about it, though she could not exactly have said why.

"Well, now," continued the unconscious Lady Mary, "let us make haste and get ready for *déjeuner*, for we are rather late, and I am very hungry."

In about ten minutes they had made their toilettes and went downstairs. As they entered the dining-room, Blanche cast a furtive glance at the seat at the top of the table—now only a few places from her own.

Alas! for the garish light of day! The apparition under the hotel lamp had once more completely disappeared. Eyes and expression were so completely hidden under the blue goggles, that she began to think the whole thing had been fancy, or an optical delusion.

She felt thoroughly ashamed of her own folly in having made that idealistic sketch, which she

now determined to destroy the moment she went upstairs again.

Lady Mary talked to him a great deal during the meal, but Blanche made no attempt to join. She was annoyed with herself and with him; and she was dismayed to realise the progress in intimacy Lady Mary was making. She even thought she heard something about plans for a walk, and a view to which he was offering to escort her whenever she felt inclined.

Directly *déjeuner* was over, Blanche went straight to her room, locked the door, and opened her dressing-table drawer.

She wanted to tear up the sketch as quickly as possible. She was herself quite startled for a moment at the exact reproduction she had made of the now vanished apparition of the night before.

She looked at it almost regretfully as she recalled the general appearance of the person she had just left below.

A feeling of contempt for herself and her power of idealising came over her as she looked at it.

But, after all, she did not destroy it.

"It might," she thought, "come in some day as a foundation for some 'fancy' portrait or other. As, indeed, a purely 'fancy portrait' it was," she added rather scornfully.

So she put it back into the drawer again, upon its face, with some handkerchiefs and other things upon it.

It was a very hot afternoon, so, towards four o'clock, the two ladies went to sit in the Jardins, and established themselves very comfortably on basket-chairs under the trees, with their books and work.

"This is certainly cooler than the hotel garden," said Lady Mary.

"Yes, and so much more private," said Blanche; "we are quite to ourselves here, instead of being surrounded by all sorts and conditions of men and women, as we are there."

But here Lady Mary demurred, and rallied Blanche on her exclusiveness and unsociability. She lost a great deal, she told her, by not talking to her neighbours at the *table d'hôte* and in the garden. That was the way to benefit by the complete change of being abroad, for you got new ideas by rubbing up against people

of different nationalities—to say nothing of the opportunity of improving your languages. The people were all foreigners, and you would never be likely to see them again; so what did it matter whom you chatted with?

“They are not *all* foreigners,” was on the tip of Blanche’s tongue; but, on second thoughts, she did not make the remark.

It was, however, perhaps more solitude in a crowd than absolute privacy. For on all sides of them were French families siting in groups; the wives working, the husbands smoking, the children playing about.

Lady Mary soon became thoroughly engrossed and amused watching the moving pictures around her, and her needle-work made very little progress. There were scenes of family life all around them; parents, children, babies, nurses—all living an out-door life together.

“I think the French are more domestic than we are, after all,” she observed to Blanche, as a young couple passed by, arm-in-arm, talking earnestly, the *bonne* with the baby walking alongside.

"I don't think, with all his love for his children, I should get *my* husband to walk with me under those circumstances—nor should I care about it myself. The *bonne* must hear every word they say to each other."

The hour for drinking the waters arrived, all too soon; and they had to leave their cosy quarters and join the throng at the wells.

They passed Monsieur twice as he walked up and down in company with others. But the third time he was alone; and he came straight up and joined them.

"Our labours are now over," he said to Lady Mary, with a smile. "Would you like me to show you the walk I was telling you of, or do you think it is too hot? It is no very great distance."

"I should like it very much," she answered. "We have been sitting still all the afternoon, and a little exercise will be good for us. Besides, it is getting cool and pleasant now."

Blanche felt rather put out. She was not much accustomed to do what she did not like, and she said to herself that it was rather hard she should be forced into an acquaintance

which she did not wish to make. She really did not know if her parents would approve of it, and she felt sure her brother would be disgusted when he arrived. She certainly thought Mary ought to try to find out something about him before she struck up such an intimacy as going like this, on long walks into the country, involved.

However, there was no help for it, and they started—Blanche carefully putting herself on the other side of Lady Mary. She walked along rather moodily, determined not to speak a word herself, and to show him that she, at least, was not going to lend herself to any sort of intimacy with him.

Meantime, he appeared very indifferent whether she talked or not. He was chatting most agreeably with Lady Mary on all sorts of subjects. He appeared to have a wide range of interests, to be very well informed, and to have a large acquaintance with both books and places. She had not meant to listen, far less to join; but she was carried away at last by the interest of what he was saying, and turned her head eagerly towards him for a moment; but meeting

the glance of those dreadful blue goggles, she very quickly looked away again. All the same, she presently turned his way again, and broke in with some remark almost before she knew what she was doing.

He glanced her way in return for a moment, but went on talking to Lady Mary just as if she had not spoken.

Blanche, very inconsistently, felt piqued. He thinks me "just a girl," she thought indignantly, and only cares to talk to married women.

The spot to which he escorted them well repaid the fatigue of getting there; but Lady Mary felt too tired to walk back again. She therefore decided to drive home. A passing fiacre was hired, and their cavalier put them into the carriage, refusing however the lift which Lady Mary offered him.

"He certainly is a most agreeable man," said Lady Mary, as they drove off; and Blanche, in common honesty, was obliged to assent.

"Shall you not try to find out who he is?" she summoned up courage to ask.

"I may, when I know him a little better,"

answered Lady Mary—"if I get an opportunity. But I can't do it just yet. It is rather an awkward thing to do. Not that it much matters. We shall probably never see or hear anything of him again; and whether his name is Brown, Jones or Robinson, does not seem to me to signify very much. Besides, I gather from what he told me, that he will not be here much longer. He has nearly finished his course and any day we may find him gone."

CHAPTER III.

THERE was a fresh lot of people at dinner that night; and Monsieur was much taken up with conversation of a general kind; though he found time every now and then to have a little chat with Lady Mary, whose seat was now at his side.

There was a Parisian lady, who rather attracted the attention of the table; and she was so full of talk, and so original, that our friends found interest and amusement in listening to her, as she discoursed to a group of her compatriots.

She was a restless, dissatisfied-looking woman, and the tenor of her somewhat vehement remarks seemed directed chiefly against marriage.

“C'est un évènement dans la vie d'une femme,” was the first sentence that reached them, and attracted Lady Mary's attention at

once; "*mais dans la vie d'un homme—rien de tout!*"

"How I should like to ask her if marriages are still arranged in France!" said Lady Mary. "Myself, I can never imagine that they can possibly turn out well."

"*Un bon mari, une bonne ménage,*" here broke in the voice of the lady again—"c'est le Paradis. *Le contraire, c'est l'Enfer. Il n'y a pas de milieu, pas de Purgatoire; voilà!*"

The gentle Lady Mary was rather startled.

Divers French bathing-places were the next topic of conversation; and she complained bitterly of the dulness of the one she had just left. There was no Casino: no "*distractions*" of any kind. Someone suggested that the country and scenery at the condemned place were very beautiful, but was met with the impatient exclamation: "*La campagne! J'en ai assez par exemple! La nature! Oui, pour le jour—mais il faut passer les soirées!*"

There was a Casino here, the same person suggested by way of compensation.

"Ah, merci!" she rejoined. "*Je suis allée une fois, et cela me suffit! Une triste Casino!*

Je m'ennuie tellement ici," she added. But she soon got back to what was apparently her favourite subject—denunciations against husbands in general, and French husbands in particular.

There was a pretty little Spanish woman with her child at the far end of the table; and the Parisian, after taking a look at the pair through her *lorgnons*, and expressing her admiration of both, turned to her neighbour and said: "*Où donc est son mari?*"

It was explained that he had brought his wife and child to settle them, and was returning to fetch them as soon as the child should have finished the course of baths and waters. It was added that they were a most devoted young couple.

She laughed scornfully. "*Les maris qui aiment mieux loin que près!*" she exclaimed. "*Ah! comme la distance plait dans les affaires conjugales!* *Ah! mon Dieu!* *quelle comédie, la vie!*"

Here an old lady indicated the presence of Blanche and other young girls, and said something to the effect that she ought not to dis-

parage matrimony before young ladies, or she would put them off it.

"Ah!" she said, with an impetuous shrug of her shoulders. "*Il faut bien essayer. Mais c'est un essai qui coûte bien cher! Mon Dieu!*"

"I am sure that poor lady has a sad history," said Monsieur to Lady Mary; for he, in common with the rest, had been listening to what she was saying—"and she is making her own experience the rule instead of the exception."

"Poor thing!" said Lady Mary softly; "I think I shall follow her into the garden after dinner, and have a little talk with her."

Which she accordingly did; and after a short conversation on ordinary matters, she led up to the subject she was interested in, and propounded her question about arranged marriages.

But she was hardly prepared for the vehemence of the denunciation of the system, and of French homes, which was the result.

Nothing, the Frenchwoman said, was thought of but "*la dotte.*"

“Une femme a beau être aimable, intelligente, belle; cela ne compte rien. C'est pour quoi il y a tant de mauvaises ménages.”

Lady Mary tried feebly to reproduce what she had observed that afternoon in the *Jardins* of French domestic life; but she was no match for the irate lady.

It was no use trying to speak in defence of it; and, rather depressed by the conversation, the happy English wife, who had married the man of her choice, and “lived happy ever after,” left the garden, and joined Blanche upstairs.

Soon after, they started for the band. There was a longer pause than usual between the two first pieces, and Lady Mary began to get a little bored.

“I wish our friend would appear,” she said, looking round.

“Friend? What friend?” said Blanche perversely.

“Why! Monsieur, of course.”

“Oh! do you call him a *friend?*”

“Well, an acquaintance, then,” said Lady Mary, in rather an irritated tone. “I see, Blanche,

you have taken a prejudice against that poor man. Now *why?*”

“I cannot say his appearance is in his favour,” said Blanche, “it is not very prepossessing.”

“Well, there I do not agree with you,” said Lady Mary. “I think he has rather a *distingué* air about him, and a very good figure.”

“No one can look very *distingué* with a limp,” retorted Blanche, — “that ‘hop-and-go-one’ walk gives a particularly dilapidated aspect; and as to his figure, why! he is all down on one side.”

“Poor man! he has probably had an illness or something.”

“Well, *I* should say,” said Blanche, “that he was eaten up, positively eaten up, with gout: —one of those men, who, Rupert warned me, are always to be met with in these water-drinking places; ‘*bon-vivants*,’ who, to use his own expression, have ‘done themselves too well;’ and are trying to undo the ill effects thereof by new habits of life: and a little less champagne”

She suddenly stopped short.

A cough sounded from a little way off; and

the object of her criticisms rose quietly from the seat where he was sitting, and disappeared down the avenue.

“Blanche!” exclaimed Lady Mary horrified —“how could you speak so loud! He *must* have heard.”

But Lady Mary could not be more dismayed than Blanche herself. She was terribly distressed.

“I had no idea there was anyone on that seat,” she said.

“You really should be more careful,” said Lady Mary—“and, anyhow, all you said was most ill-natured and uncharitable, considering you know absolutely nothing about the man. You might give him the benefit of the doubt, and not be so suspicious.”

“I am very sorry,” said Blanche humbly; “but I don’t think he could have heard.”

“I am not at all so sure,” said Lady Mary, with some severity; “but I most sincerely hope not.”

The occurrence cast quite a gloom over the evening. Blanche was miserable; she could

not bear the idea of hurting people's feelings.

Could he possibly have heard? she kept on mentally saying: one moment persuading herself that it was impossible at that distance; the next, remembering that ominous cough, and his sudden disappearance.

Moreover, that disappearance was complete.

The evening wore on, and they saw no more of him.

Blanche became more and more filled with compunction.

Had he heard? *Could* he have heard? she went on to herself at intervals.

Whether he had or not remained a mystery; but, later on, as they were walking home-wards, he joined them. Blanche hardly dared look up, so ashamed and uncertain did she feel.

The subject of conversation on which he and Lady Mary had embarked was not half exhausted when they reached the hotel.

"I am sorry," said the latter; "there was a great deal more I wanted to ask you."

"We will resume the discussion to-morrow, if you wish it," he said, with a smile.

"I certainly do!" she responded. "It interests me immensely."

"*À demain, then,*" he said, as he took off his hat, and walked away.

"He heard nothing, evidently," said Lady Mary. "I am so glad!"

But Blanche was not so sure, and did not feel so comfortably certain as her friend appeared to be.

It might be fancy of course—and she knew she was imaginative—but still she had an idea that there had been rather a look of effort on his face when he first joined them, as of a person who was putting some sort of strain upon himself. And when he said "good-night," and the tell-tale lamp revealed his expression for a moment, she had thought a melancholy look had been added to his open countenance. Blanche was really very tender-hearted, and the sense of having given pain to another quite haunted her, and she could not get to sleep for thinking of it.

She vainly wished over and over again that

she had never said such unkind and uncharitable things.

If he *had* overheard, all she could say was that he was the most generous and forgiving of men to join them as he had done, as if nothing had happened.

Now Blanche had the greatest admiration for a generous nature. She had seen enough of the contrary in her life to value it very highly when she met with it; and generosity of nature seemed to suit so well with the frank, candid expression of countenance with which she had been already so taken.

She fell asleep at last; but the same train of thought met her when she woke in the morning.

She told Lady Mary she was tired, and would rather not go out for the early walk; which was true. But a further reason was that she felt shy of meeting him again.

When Lady Mary was well out of the way she took out her hidden sketch, and added a touch or two. Then she put it away in her drawer again, and went to sit by the window in the sitting-room.

She drew back for a moment, for he was sitting out there on a seat, reading the paper, and smoking a cigarette.

But he seemed to be too deeply engrossed in what he was reading for there to be much fear of his looking up.

He was not left long undisturbed.

Cries of "*Monsieur! Monsieur!!*" in childish voices came from the hotel, and the little French girls and their brother came running across the garden. They were all dressed, and evidently ready for a journey, for they held packages of all descriptions in their hands, and the youngest girl carried an enormous doll.

They ran up to him, and clustered round him. Down went his newspaper directly, and he greeted them with a pleasant smile. They surrounded him, all chattering at once, and they seemed to be begging for a story, for Blanche caught the words, uttered in beseeching tones: "*Encore une, Monsieur, pour la dernière fois!!*"

They did not plead in vain. He took the little boy on his knee, while the little girls pressed

close to him, with bright, expectant faces turned up to his. Apparently, blue goggles had no deterrent effect upon *them*. They probably felt, even if they did not know, what kind eyes were hidden under them.

He began his story, and, judging by the attitudes of strained and breathless attention with which it was listened to, it was a most exciting one.

But before it was finished, came the cries of "Virginie! Pierrot! Juliette! *Venez donc! Venez vite!*"

The sound of the hotel omnibus clattering into the courtyard accompanied the parental summons. There was a cry of regret from the children—and the little party broke up in haste.

But the children would not take leave of their friend a moment before it was necessary. He must "*absolument*" come with them to the door, and see them off. They clung to him, insisting he should accompany them, and it was evident he could not resist their entreaties. He threw away his cigarette, put down the newspaper on the seat, and got up.

One child took his hand, another held on to his stick, the third danced and capered in front of him—and so they all crossed the garden and disappeared.

Blanche had the curiosity to go to her bedroom, which commanded a view of the courtyard, to see the start—though she was rather ashamed of herself for doing so, and was glad that Lady Mary was safe out of the way.

When she got to the window, a bustling scene of departure met her eyes. The hotel omnibus, covered with luggage, was waiting; and the passengers were packing themselves inside as closely as possible.

Monsieur was standing at the door, assisting the various ladies to get in, handing them their bags and parcels, and taking a kind and cordial farewell of all. The old lady whom Blanche mentally named “Elly-party-per-Parry” was among the number, and she could not help observing that Monsieur was quite as kind and attentive to her as he was to the rest. He shook hands with her warmly, and while she got into the omnibus, he held her enormous “*sac-de-nuit*,” crammed so full that its sides stuck out

in a most absurd way. But he handed it in after she was settled with the same care with which he had just handed in a Spanish lady her dainty dressing-case.

Even the restless and dissatisfied *Parisienne*, who was flying from a place where she was "*tellement ennuée*" melted for a moment into a suspicion of genuine warmth as she shook hands with him and wished him good-bye, and "*bien des plaisirs.*"

But when the turn of the little girls came, they threw their arms round him with all the enthusiastic demonstration of their natures and nationality, and held up their pretty little faces to his. He laughed, and, taking off his hat, bent down and kissed them lightly on both cheeks, foreign fashion, without a trace of "*mauvais honte.*"

"*Adieu! Adieu! mes petites amies,*" Blanche heard him say.

"*Mais non, Monsieur—non, non!*" said the little one emphatically. "*Je ne veux pas dire adieu! Je dirai! 'Au revoir!'*"

"*Au revoir, donc, ma petite,*" he rejoined, as

he lifted her into the omnibus, and then handed her her enormous doll.

The door was shut with a bang by the conductor, and the omnibus began slowly to clatter out of the courtyard.

There was a chorus of "*Adieu, Monsieur!*" "*Au revoir, Monsieur!*" Little white handkerchiefs were waved from the open window; little hands were eagerly kissed towards him as he stood with his hat off, waving his hand.

"*Bon voyage!*" he called out—"et *bon retour!*"

"*A l'année prochaine!*" cried the children—and then the omnibus turned the corner and was out of sight in a moment.

He walked away with a smile on his face, but it was a smile tempered with some other feeling; and he seemed to Blanche to be repeating something to himself rather sadly, as he passed under the window where she was standing, and disappeared.

It sounded to her like poetry, and its rhythm was familiar to her; she was sure it was something

she knew, though she could not at the moment recall it to her mind.

She herself lingered some time longer at the window.

The little scene she had witnessed had taken hold of her imagination; and, though the court-yard was silent and empty, to her it was peopled still.

She seemed to see again the look of grateful pleasure on old "Elly-party's" face—the momentarily brighter aspect of the dissatisfied *Parisienne*—the wistful expression of the little girl as she refused to say good-bye—and the air still seemed full of the farewell cries of the children.

"That man," she said to herself, as at last she turned away—"that man acts as a sort of moral sunshine, and people expand to him as the buds open out to the warm rays of the sun. I wish my nature were more like his!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE rest of the morning was taken up with their removal into the “*appartement*”; and they were fully occupied after they got there in making their room pretty, setting out their photographs, and in arranging the flowers they had bought in the market.

They made it all look very homelike and pleasant, and were both much pleased with the result of their efforts. Rather exhausted by their labours, they had *déjeuner* at home, and took a long drive later in the day. They dined at a new hotel, and spent a quiet evening in the *appartement*.

The next day was so hopelessly wet that Lady Mary had the waters brought to her, and neither she nor Blanche went out at all. They settled themselves early to their reading and drawing.

The sketch of Lady Mary was making great

progress. She had seen it herself, and had expressed her opinion that, as far as one could judge of one's own face, it was very like; and she felt sure both her husband and children would be delighted with it.

Encouraged by this applause, Blanche worked away hard. She was attentive to her drawing, but her thoughts wandered sadly from the book Lady Mary was reading out aloud. If the reader had suddenly stopped and asked any question about the subject in hand, Blanche would not have been able to hazard an answer of any kind about it.

Her thoughts were on quite another tack, and they were not pleasant ones. For she was still worrying herself with speculations on the old topic, and was suffering now from a compunction which was rapidly increasing to remorse.

She became suddenly aware of the tramp of footsteps on the wooden staircase which led to the door of the little *appartement*. Lady Mary went on reading, and did not notice them; but Blanche paused in her drawing and

listened, for she felt sure she knew that firm but uneven footfall.

She felt her colour rising as a bell rang sharply, and directly after, the door opened and the "*fille*" announced, "*Un Monsieur qui demande Madame*"; which announcement was followed by the entrance of the person on whom her thoughts were running.

"I did not see you anywhere this morning," he said, advancing to Lady Mary; "and as I had a plan to propose for this afternoon if the weather should clear, I took the liberty of calling."

"I am delighted to see you," said Lady Mary, frankly extending her hand.

Blanche, with her head bent over her drawing, was feeling very confused, and devoutly wishing she had had the presence of mind to escape directly she had heard the bell ring.

She looked up, however, and bowed. He returned the bow, and then went and sat down by Lady Mary.

"Had it been a fine day," he said, "I was going to have proposed driving to the Bellevue

hotel in the woods, after drinking the afternoon waters, and dining there *al fresco*. But the rain seems so persistent that I don't know what to say about it."

"I think it would be charming," she replied; "and my impression is, we shall have a fine afternoon after this downpour."

"What refreshing optimism!" he said, laughing, as the pattering rain-drops made themselves heard on the window-pane. "But if it should be as you say, what I should propose would be that I should go on and meet you there, so as to order dinner before you come. Then we might drive home in the cool of the evening in time for the band, and the so-called illuminations; for the Jardins are to be lighted up to-night, in honour of a royal birthday."

"It will be delightful," said Lady Mary, "and I am sure it will be fine. Look! the rain is over, and the sun coming out."

"Bravo!" he said, "we shall be able to carry out our plan. What a pretty little apartment you have here," he added, looking round the room, "and how cosy and homelike you have made it look! Ah! in spite of what we were saying the

other night, I shall always maintain that an English lady knows better than any other how to make a home!"

Lady Mary smiled and bowed in acknowledgment of the little compliment.

"So cool and shady too," he continued, "no glare." And he took off his goggles, and put them in his pocket.

The interrupted conversation of two nights before had been a comparison between French, English, and American women; a kind of discussion which was a very favourite one with Lady Mary; and she now resumed it by asking him if he had known many Americans intimately; whether they were not very agreeable and clever, or whether their voices and expressions did not spoil the pleasure of conversing with them.

"Yes," was his answer, "I have known many intimately. They are no doubt clever and agreeable, very well read and well informed. And you must not think they *all* have disagreeable voices. Though it is to our own countrywomen that the palm must always be given for that most

excellent thing in woman—a low, soft voice—to my mind a great charm."

"But we are not so agreeable," laughed Lady Mary.

He laughed too.

"There are exceptions, of course. But, speaking generally, I should frankly say no. Both Americans and French are more 'light in hand' and understand better the 'art' of conversation. They bring more small change into the market, and perhaps men, rightly or wrongly, like that better than the more heavy . . ." He corrected himself quickly, "the more solid gold of our own countrywomen. But you must remember, please, that I am generalising freely when I say all this. Besides, if English ladies have not quite the 'give and take' in conversation of the French and Americans; if they are a little stiff, and do not always give themselves the same trouble to be agreeable, it is not their fault exactly. It is the way they are brought up."

He paused a moment, and added, "They always wait for the man to begin; they expect him to open the conversation. They are not, I

think, sufficiently brought up as companions to men; and, if you will allow me to say so," he ended, with a smile; "those are the women who are the most agreeable."

"I quite agree with you," said she, "and I shall bear that in mind in bringing up my own little girls."

"Are those the little ladies in question?" he said, as his eye fell on the photographs with which the proud young mother had so plentifully adorned the writing-table in the distance.

"Yes," she said; "come and look at them a little nearer."

He got up to obey, and the move brought both him and Lady Mary behind where Blanche was sitting, with her head bent over her drawing. She had felt uncomfortable all the time they had been talking, and was longing to get away. A certain guilty feeling kept her in a state of shyness and self-consciousness quite unusual to her; and she did not enjoy the sensation at all, nor the general gist of his remarks.

And yet all the time she was longing to look up, for she had heard the snap of the goggles as he put them away, and knew that for the first time since their acquaintance she would have an opportunity of seeing in broad daylight what, as yet, she had only known by twilight or lamplight; and she wanted very much to put some extra touches to that hidden sketch in her drawer.

As he passed behind the easel after admiring the photographs, he stopped short involuntarily, and exclaimed, "Oh! what an excellent likeness!"

The soul of the artist in Blanche was gratified by this spontaneous and genuine tribute to her portrait-painting; but she did not look up or answer.

"*Pardon, Mademoiselle,*" he said, "*vous avez beaucoup de talent. Je vous en fais mon compliment.*" Blanche felt at a disadvantage when he dropped into French; a habit he appeared to have of doing almost unconsciously.

"To paint portraits," he said to Lady Mary, though he still stood behind Blanche, "one must

be very observant, and note things very keenly. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, I quite agree with you," she answered, from the other side of the room, for she had resumed her seat when she had shown off her children's photographs. "I have never been able to catch a likeness myself, though I have often tried. Whether it is because I am not observant, or because I am short-sighted I have never made up my mind. Probably both." She finished with a laugh.

"Ah!" he said reflectively, adding, *sotto voce*, "*Sans doute, Mademoiselle n'a pas la vue basse.*"

He left his position behind the easel, and went and sat down by Lady Mary.

"I have been reading Browning this morning," he said, taking a small book out of his pocket. The change of conversation seemed a little abrupt.

"Oh, I don't understand Browning," said Lady Mary; "he is too analytic and too complex for me. I am not at all analytic. I often wish the writers of the present day were a little less so."

"Writers and artists are always analytic," he said. "That enables them to deduce and to reproduce. They observe keenly and *imagine vividly*." This was said in a distinctly marked tone. Blanche, with her head bending lower and lower over her canvas, was feeling more and more uncomfortable. Every word he said seemed to her charged with meaning; or was it, she asked herself, only her own fancy that those sentences of his held a "*double entendre*"? After this, he entirely changed the conversation, and began to talk on indifferent subjects.

Blanche, thinking by the sound of his voice that his head was turned towards Lady Mary, presently determined to seize her opportunity and steal a glance at him. She cautiously raised her eyes at a moment when he was deep in conversation. But she found herself wholly mistaken in supposing his head was turned away. He was looking straight at her, though he was addressing Lady Mary, who was looking down at her knitting. And their eyes met!

In a moment she became aware that the

dim light had in no way deceived her: her imaginative pencil in no way been at fault. The bright brown eyes, with their frank and fearless expression, were no fiction; they were an undoubted fact. They were looking at her straight, with a kind but penetrating expression; but there was a softer look in them than she had realised, to which was added now a look of amusement, as if they saw through and through her, and, seeing through her, were amused at her.

Blanche could stand the position no longer. Horribly ashamed of herself, and feeling she was going to blush, she rose hastily, and saying something about putting away her sketch to dry, she escaped into the adjoining room; where, to her dismay, she found that her looking-glass gave back a flushed face, a discomposed countenance, and rather agitated eyes. She could have stamped her foot upon the ground with the annoyance she felt. She was stung too by the mortification of that amused look in his glance. He was laughing at her, *she*, Blanche Talbot, and *he* a man "picked up at the *table d'hôte*!" Had he taken her measure?

Did he understand 'what her feelings had been towards him from the first; those feelings which now seemed to her somewhat petty? Was that what was amusing him? Or was it that he had overheard her remarks, and that he knew how guilty she must be feeling? Was that what his amused glance meant?

She felt somehow as if she were in his power; and it was a most disagreeable feeling. Would he go on for ever speaking like this in innuendoes? Was that the form his resentment would take? If so, it would be very trying. She would rather have an open enemy. But, above all, she would like to know for certain whether he had heard or not. It would be easier for her to know how to act. Oh, what a terribly humiliating position she had got herself into by her incaution, and want of charity! Her thoughts ran riot for the next few minutes. But of one thing she felt certain, nothing should induce her to go back into that room until he was gone. But all this time the thought of his expression lingered in her mind, and it was on that that her thoughts were dwelling most. (Her artistic thoughts, of course!)

He had a really beautiful countenance, and it was that which gave his face its singular charm. And what was a dilapidated gait, after all? What were even blue goggles, if they held behind them such an expression as that? What were outward defects of any kind, if the man himself were all that that beauty of countenance denoted?

All unconsciously she was humming to herself an old Scotch air, of which the words ran thus:—

“For a’ that, and a’ that,
A man’s a man for a’ that!”

The dinner *al fresco*, the drive back in the cool of the evening, and the sitting out in the illuminated Jardins, listening to the band, were all equally pleasant; but Blanche’s share in it was only that of the looker-on, the bad third.

He never tried to break down the barrier she had raised, and his conversation was entirely addressed to Lady Mary.

But there were no more *double entendres*, or innuendoes; so much so that Blanche began

to think that the sentences which she had thought held them might have been meaningless after all; just a chance coincidence, which her heated imagination and guilty conscience had translated into something they had never been intended to convey. This, at anyrate; was a great relief to her.

Once or twice, as on a former occasion, she herself broke into the conversation, carried away for a moment by her interest in what he was saying; but, though he just glanced her way for a minute, he answered her remark to Lady Mary, or half to himself in that way he seemed to have a habit of doing.

But he did not address her directly once, and, for the most part, she sat in silence on the other side of Lady Mary; while the two discussed every sort of subject, "from grave to gay, from lively to severe"; feeling like the schoolroom girl who is too young, or too unimportant, to be included in the talk of her elders.

Oddly enough, she rather chafed against the position, though it was of her own making,

and quite what she would have chosen till now.

She was dimly conscious of a dawning interest in this man, though she rather fought against it. She had a sort of feeling of mystery about him. He reminded her of one of those mysterious personages in fairy tales, who had always appealed very strongly to her imagination as a child; a monster who was really a handsome prince in disguise; but who, for some reason, could only show himself as he really was at a certain hour of the night, returning at daylight to the monster you had first thought him to be: but a monster who could make himself very charming, in spite of his outward appearance.

And the monster Monsieur certainly was again during the drive and dinner by daylight; the blue goggles on, and his expressive eyes entirely hidden.

But as they sat in the Jardins at night, he removed them, with the usual result. Moreover, he seemed to her on closer inspection to be a much younger man than she had hitherto thought him. She had ample opportunity from

where she sat, during the playing of the band, for studying his face unobserved, and for a good long time.

The result of all this was that the next morning she was able to add some very telling touches to her "fancy portrait."

Two other sketches found their way into her portfolio side by side with it, which were even more idealistic and fanciful. The first represented a diligence disappearing in the distance, at the open window of which were the bright pretty faces of children who were waving farewells to a figure in the foreground. Underneath this picture was written, "*A l'année prochaine!*"

The second represented a group in a garden. The same pretty children were gathered round the same figure, which was seated this time; and their bright faces were upturned to his, while they listened intently to what he was saying.

Under this picture was written, "*Encore une, Monsieur, pour la dernière fois!*"

They were mere sketches, and the subjects more indicated than defined; but they were clever

little drawings for all that, and very lifelike. The only respect in which they were *not* true to life, was that in neither case had the principal figure got on blue goggles.

Blanche looked at these sketches with satisfaction as she put them away. They so exactly reproduced the two little scenes she had wished to remember.

And, as she did so, the lines he had repeated to himself as he passed under her window after the diligence had driven off, came suddenly into her mind—

“Oh! what would the world be to us
If the children were no more?
We should dread the desert behind us
Worse than the dark before!”

CHAPTER V.

THINGS went on like this for several days, and the walks and expeditions together drifted, as these sort of things soon do in foreign watering-places, into a regular thing, a matter of course. No one else arrived to alter or vary the state of affairs, and so day after day the routine was the same.

Day after day he walked with them, drove with them, sat with them in the Jardins at night. Daily they got to know him better and better; till at last it seemed to Blanche that she had been living this life for months, and that there were few people she had seen so much of, or known so intimately, as this chance acquaintance.

But the intimacy was between him and Lady Mary. The personal relations between him and Blanche remained much the same. He was perfectly courteous to her, but he seldom addressed

her directly. He was Lady Mary's friend, not hers. She was, and continued to be, a bad third. And, with perverse inconsistency, she got daily more and more irritated with her position. It was in vain that she told herself it was just as well; that it would never have done for Rupert, on his arrival, to find her what she knew he would call "cheek by jowl" with a man picked up at a *table d'hôte*, whose name even she did not know; it was in vain that she tried to find consolation in the thought that it was her own doing, that it was *she* who had been "stand-offish" from the first. In spite of all this, she chafed more and more against the state of things, and her vanity was wounded by the way her presence was ignored.

Then, again, sometimes, all wounded vanity would be lost in the fear that, after all, he *had* overheard all her remarks on that unfortunate evening, and that his persistent ignoring of her was a form of resentment; a resentment which she quite allowed he had every right to feel.

But then again it was difficult to believe a frank and generous nature could harbour resent-

ment; and if countenance was in any way to be believed in, his was such a nature.

But from whatever cause it came, whatever its root might be, Blanche regretted it more and more every day, for she enjoyed these walks and talks immensely, and it was galling to be such a cipher.

Not for the world would she have owned it, even to herself; any more than she would have owned how entirely she had altered every opinion she had formed about this man, how completely she felt she had been mistaken in her estimate of him, and how she took a pleasure in his society, which surprised her, and of which she was half ashamed. She knew how little she needed now the intermittent lecture about exclusiveness, prejudice, judging by appearances, etc., which her short-sighted and unobservant chaperon still saw fit to deliver.

Lady Mary herself made no secret of thinking him one of the most agreeable persons she had ever met; and openly and constantly expressed the enjoyment she found in his society, congratulating herself on not being troubled with Blanche's "exclusiveness," which would have

prevented them from having such a resource from the monotony of their daily life, in a place where they had not found, and evidently were not going to find, a soul they knew to speak to.

Blanche began to get irritated with Lady Mary. She wished she would not monopolise him so entirely. She wished she could sometimes divide him from her for a moment, and get his whole attention for a brief interval. He *must* address her directly then.

What mortified her was the feeling that he did not consider her worth talking to, did not care to hear her opinions, though he listened with such respectful deference to Lady Mary's; who was not really, as Blanche could not help knowing, nearly so clever as she was, and certainly not so appreciative of what, to Blanche, was one of his greatest attractions—his keen sense of humour. Lady Mary was intelligent enough; but she was inclined to take things rather "*au grand sérieux.*" She required sometimes that flashes of wit should be rather carefully explained. She had her own criterion of humour, but it was not his. This Blanche *did* think some-

times he had discovered; in short, he could hardly help it.

But it did not seem to make any difference in his pleasure in Lady Mary's society; whereat Blanche wondered; for she herself had always felt very strongly not only that "the essence of conversation consists in how much may be taken for granted," but still more strongly that "a difference of tastes in jokes is a great strain upon the affections."

Still, there *were* times when she fancied not only that he had found out Lady Mary's want of response in these ways, but her own ever-ready appreciation. For his eye seemed to be contracting a habit of glancing at her for a moment across Lady Mary, when he said anything amusing; as if he knew she would understand, and understand quickly, moreover, which is half the battle!

Annoyed at her daily increasing interest in him, so entirely unreciprocated as it was, Blanche tried mentally to bring him to the bar of her own judgments on certain points, to find him wanting, and to look down upon him accordingly.

She was just at that stage in a girl's life when nothing but a sportsman goes down.

Her brother was her model; a hard rider and a crack shot.

"What a muff of a man he must be," she said to herself, "to be hanging about a place like this, doing nothing, when the shooting season has begun!"

For August was over, September had dawned; he had finished his "course"; and still he did not go.

Then she had a great contempt for an idle man; and he did not appear to her to have any profession, any fixed employment of any kind; or, at anyrate, she never could gather from his conversation that he had.

He stood indicted before her as a "do-nothing man"; a mere "*flâneur*"; wasting his time in amusement, wandering aimlessly about from foreign town to foreign town, his fluency in languages lending countenance to her opinion.

"What an existence!" she sometimes said to herself; "no object in life, no career, no ambitions, no manly pursuits!"

She was too transparently truthful to hide

her feelings, even if she wished to do so, and no doubt they were sometimes conveyed in her manner and conversation, whether consciously or not.

And yet, all the time, she felt that he was not a man she could altogether look down upon; though his failure to come up to her favourite standards was so conspicuous.

And so the time went on.

Every day she thought he would announce his intended departure, every evening she thought he would say he was going next day. * But no! Still every morning he met them at the Wells, still spent the day and evening with them, and still never a hint did this "muff of a man" drop about going!

But what annoyed Blanche even more was that she had a conscious feeling that she rather dreaded his doing so—felt what a blank his departure would cause; wished things could go on as they were doing, quite indefinitely.

For, gradually, very gradually, a change imperceptibly had come about in their relationship.

He had ceased to ignore her; he addressed her directly, and included her distinctly in every conversation.

Nay, more; he turned to her instinctively for appreciation and sympathy; and listened to her remarks and to the expression of her opinions with the same, even greater, deference than he showed to Lady Mary.

It had become by degrees a not at all unusual thing for the two to keep up an animated conversation, in which Lady Mary took little or no part. It was really the working of the Law of Action and Reaction, though Blanche did not know it. Her own manner to him had gradually so altered that he responded to the change. She was quite unaware that she now showed undisguised pleasure when they met. Her face, unknown to herself, brightened, and a smile came into her eyes. She had that inconvenient thing to its possessor—though such an attraction to others—a tell-tale face. Her changing expression showed her most passing feelings, revealed her inward thoughts; and everyone is not so unobservant as Lady Mary Fitzroy.

Blanche found herself sometimes even wishing Rupert were *not* coming! Had it not been for the thought of his arrival, she would have been able to give herself up to the enjoyment of this new acquaintance, and the undoubted charm of his companionship, without any qualms or misgivings; but with the thought of Rupert at the back of her mind, she could not do so.

Rupert *was* coming, and that too very soon now.

What would he say if he found her great friends with a nameless stranger? For it was in vain that Blanche had again more than once suggested to Lady Mary that she should try and find out his name.

That vague little lady showed a great indifference on the subject, and a total want of the curiosity by which Blanche was actuated. She certainly said she *would* ask him some day, if she should remember to do it at a convenient moment, or if an opportunity offered itself when she could do it without seeming inquisitive. But then she never *did* find such a moment, or, at anyrate, she never asked him;

so that at last Blanche got too shy to say anything more about it, fearing either that Lady Mary would think her gossipy and inquisitive, or else would wonder why she attached any importance to a matter she herself held to be so immaterial.

There was no help to be got from Monsieur himself; nothing to be gathered or deduced from his conversation. He never talked about himself, never alluded in the most distant way to his own affairs. Nor did he talk about people. He was no gossip, this "man picked up at a *table d'hôtel!*"

There was never a trace of an autobiographical element in his talk; and this, as a rule, Blanche liked; as we all do, seeing that a person thus reticent is free from egotism.

But there are people we meet now and then who we wish *would* talk about themselves. It would interest us immensely. We should like to hear what they think, whom they know, what they have experienced: in short, what their past has been, which has made them what they now are.

And Blanche felt all this very strongly in

the present instance. Though she liked him all the better for his lack of egotism and respected him the more, still she wished he would sometimes throw a little more light on himself, and his history.

She felt she must really try and discover at least his name, before Rupert came on the scene.

There seemed no chance of Lady Mary's ever questioning him, and she began at last turning over in her mind the idea of doing so herself!

Only, as she never by any chance could divide him from Lady Mary, she felt it would require some courage. Moreover, she did not know how to broach the subject. She rehearsed mentally over and over again how she would say it; what words she would use, in case a favourable moment should ever present itself; and indeed she did it so often, that she was quite afraid she would some day come out with it unawares.

At last the opportunity came, and quite suddenly.

It happened in this way. They were all three walking home, one evening, from the band, and Lady Mary and Monsieur began talking

about names—Christian names at first, which were pretty, which were not, etc. Then they passed on to surnames; their original meanings, whence they were derived, and so on. *En passant*, he said something quite casually, but complimentary, about the names of Fitzroy and Talbot.

Blanche had not been taking any part in the discussion, but now suddenly she woke up to what was going on.

Almost before she knew she was going to do it, she found herself giving voice to the sentence so long in her mind.

She said it almost by rote, like a child who has learnt a phrase by heart.

“You have the advantage of us,” she said, rather abruptly turning to him, “for *we* do not know *yours*. So we cannot return the compliment,” she added, altering her sentence a little to suit the occasion.

He looked rather taken aback for a moment, and a little bored. Then he turned his eyes with a look of amusement in them, full upon her.

“My name is Brown!” he said . . .

CHAPTER VI.

BLANCHE'S tell-tale face fell; but before she had time to make any rejoinder, a passing acquaintance claimed his attention, and she and Lady Mary walked on.

"I told you so, dear," said the latter. "I said whether his name was Brown, Jones, or Robinson did not much matter; and you see it is Brown!"

Lady Mary was not joking. She was not even laughing. She was just speaking in her usual matter-of-fact way, and she meant what she said.

It did not matter to her, not in the least. He was a pleasant companion to have found in a dull place. What did it matter what his name was?

"A rose by any other name would smell as sweet," she added; and she was quite

pleased with herself for her apt little quota-tion.

Blanche made no answer, and they now reached the entrance to the little *appartement*.

She looked back, but Monsieur was still in close conversation with the man who had button-holed him; and she followed Lady Mary slowly upstairs.

After all, she was not sure that she did not cordially agree with her. What *did* it signify what his name was? What *do* names matter after all?

What seemed to her at that moment to matter much more was that, owing to that tiresome man who had stopped him, she should not see him again till to-morrow, and that she had missed his kind "good-night"!

On the table in the sitting-room lay the English letters.

Blanche saw hers was from Rupert. She took it up rather hastily, wished Lady Mary good-night, and went to her own bedroom. The very sight of his handwriting brought back all her qualms and misgivings. She opened it. It announced that he would arrive

at F—— in three days' time. It was even sooner than she had expected, and her heart sank, for his coming was an unwelcome thought. What would he say to find her such friends with a stranger? True, he was no longer a nameless stranger; but she did not know that she had improved the situation by finding out his name.

Other thoughts, still more unwelcome, forced themselves upon her. Was she not doing the very thing she had told herself she would have liked to do *if* Rupert had not been coming, *i.e.* giving herself up to the enjoyment of this new friendship? Was she not yielding daily more and more to the charm of his companionship, the fascination of his personality, so that it was pleasure to her even to be in his society? . . . How often she dwelt on the look in those kind brown eyes; how often she tried to transmit it to her hidden portrait, which daily grew more lifelike, she would have been ashamed for anyone to know. She was ashamed herself. For what was to be the end of it all? Even putting Rupert aside, what possible end could there be, except, that in three days'

time, she would be leaving F——, and probably never see or hear of "Mr. Brown" again?

He was sitting in the Promenade reading a newspaper when she and Lady Mary met him next day. He rose at their approach, and fetched them some chairs.

Blanche felt constrained, and conversation did not flow as easily as usual. Apparently he became aware of this; for after a time, he began reading them scraps out of the paper in his hand. When the principal news was exhausted, he skimmed over the reports of the divers "bags" which had been made in England and Scotland in the first days of September.

"Did Rupert say anything in his letter about what kind of sport he is having?" Lady Mary asked, turnig to Blanche.

"Yes," she replied; "he says the birds have not been so plentiful for years as they are this September. He has been having excellent sport!"

"Happy Rupert!" said Monsieur to himself, with a slight sigh.

Blanche turned quickly round.

"Do you know my brother?" she said in astonishment.

He looked annoyed, like a person who has said something he had not meant to say. The words had evidently escaped him. But he answered indifferently, "Oh, I have met him. After a certain time of life, Miss Talbot, one knows everyone more or less. The world is very small, you know."

But it was Blanche who felt small. For she felt he was looking upon her as the raw, newly-emancipated schoolroom girl, who is so surprised to find everyone knows everyone, and that there is nothing wonderful in a link being found with almost anybody; those who, she in her schoolroom ignorance would have fancied, lived lives wide apart, and could not possibly have anything to do with one another. And she was young enough to resent being thought so! He did not appear to be at all struck either with the coincidence which, to her, was so fraught with interest; nor did he seem to deem it the privilege to know Rupert, which she thought it to be. To her, that he should have mentioned

anyone's name was sufficiently interesting, seeing that he so very rarely did so; but that that name should have been Rupert's, was a thing quite overpowering in its interest and excitement! To know Rupert constituted a passport in her eyes, and "I have met your brother" was always to her a sufficient introduction; wherein she certainly showed her youth and inexperience. For we all know how inevitable is the mention of the "collateral," and how often it is brought forward as a sure and certain avenue to "*rapprochement*."

But, besides, Blanche felt it would do away with many of the complications and difficulties she saw arising, if Rupert and he were already acquainted.

She was inwardly wondering all sorts of things; —how soon he had realised she was Rupert's sister, when he had first discovered who she was, etc., etc.

It was only lately that he had used her name when speaking to her, and she could not remember at what period in their acquaintance he had first done so.

Her reflections were interrupted by Lady Mary.

"I am afraid he will be rather bored then," she said, "to leave home for foreign parts."

"Were you expecting your brother here?" asked Monsieur, as if an idea had suddenly occurred to him.

"Yes," Blanche answered; "he is coming to join me when Lady Mary goes back to England."

"And when will that be?" was the next question.

"In about three days," she replied.

He looked thoughtful and a little perturbed. But he said nothing more, and did not seem to wish to pursue the conversation.

There was a short silence.

It was broken by Lady Mary.

"I do hope, Blanche," she said, "that Rupert will be in better spirits. I hear on all sides how depressed he has been lately."

Blanche felt rather provoked. She wished Lady Mary would not talk about her brother so openly in the presence of a third person. It was tactless of her, she thought. And she

was all the more annoyed because she knew that what Lady Mary said was true. Rupert had lost his spirits ever since his long leave last year when he had been on an expedition into Austria. He had gone away the light-hearted fellow he naturally was; but something had happened while he was away which had saddened him. No one, not his mother, sister, nor any of his friends knew what it was. No one liked to ask him any questions, for he resented the slightest remark on the subject. But it was generally supposed to be a love-affair.

Blanche answered Lady Mary's tactless observations in a way that might mean anything or nothing, and changed the subject as soon as she could; but not before she had noticed that Monsieur's manner betrayed great interest in what was being said. He had turned his head towards Lady Mary directly she spoke, and had shot a glance at Blanche as she answered. She wondered much about it when she got home.

CHAPTER VII.

THE next morning he did not come at his usual time.

It had become so completely the habit of every day to expect him at a certain hour, that Blanche got restless at his non-appearance.

She felt quite unable to employ herself, and found herself constantly looking at the clock, and wondering what he could be about.

But the morning wore on, and still he did not appear.

He was not in the Jardins in the afternoon, nor, stranger still, at the band in the evening. Never, since she had been at F—, had Blanche passed so dull a day.

She hoped against hope that he might look in in the evening; but he never came, and at last it got too late to expect him, and they went to bed, Lady Mary loud in her lamenta-

tions at the non-appearance of their daily companion.

Next morning, Blanche was sitting reading rather listlessly, when the sound of the uneven footsteps was suddenly heard on the wooden stairs, and immediately after he entered.

"You must have looked upon me quite as a defaulter yesterday," he said to Lady Mary, in his pleasant way, as he shook hands.

"Indeed we did," she replied. "What became of you all day?"

"Some friends of mine have arrived," he answered, "and I was engaged with them all day. Then I took a long drive with them in the evening, and we dined at the 'Bellevue,' and did not get back till past ten o'clock. Lady Vansittart and her daughter. Do you know them?"

"Oh, yes, a little," said Lady Mary. "I have met them in London."

But Blanche said nothing. A feeling of dislike to Lady Vansittart and her daughter, but especially to the latter, was rising in her breast, though, unlike Lady Mary, she had not met them, and knew nothing about them.

"I dine with them again to-night," he added. And a chill of disappointment smote Blanche. The evening stretched out before her, like the day before,—flat, dull and uninteresting. Why did these people come and take him away? And how willing he seemed to go!

"But I am quite at your service till then," he said. "What would you like to do?"

Blanche felt, if he asked *her*, she would propose some plan which would take them far into the country, as far as possible from any chance of meeting these new friends of his.

To her satisfaction, Lady Mary said she should like a drive, and the hour was fixed for four o'clock.

"Where do you dine to-night?" he asked presently.

"At the 'Royale,'" said Lady Mary.

"Ah!" he said. "We all dine there, too."

He stayed talking a little while, and then he rose and went, saying his friends were strange to the place, and wanted any little assistance he could give them. He was going to take them to *déjeuner* at his own hotel.

The time till four was long and dull; but at last the hour arrived. It was a lovely afternoon, and they took a very pretty drive; but Blanche did not enjoy it. She was out of spirits, without knowing why; and she had a certain dread of the impending dinner, and of seeing him with his friends, who might, for aught she knew, be old and dear ones; and Miss Vansittart very pretty and attractive. Perhaps he would now pin himself to them, and desert her and Lady Mary altogether.

And there were only two days more.

On arriving at the "Royale," she observed a Bath chair at the door in charge of an English footman, from which someone had evidently just descended.

No doubt this was Lady Vansittart; and visions of a pretty and attractive daughter walking by the side of her mother's chair rose in Blanche's mind, and filled her with a vague uneasiness. The daughter on the one side, Monsieur on the other, and conversation carried on between the two across the chair;—this was the way, no doubt, the whole of yesterday

had been spent when they were not driving together.

She glanced round the *salle* when they entered, with anxious curiosity. There was a table for three laid near the window, and towards this table, a girl arm-in-arm with an older lady was making her way. Her back was turned, so of course Blanche could not see her face; but she had fair plaits coiled round her head, and was very tall and slight.

The two ladies seated themselves, but their backs were still turned to Blanche; and would continue to be so during dinner. Shortly after Monsieur appeared. He smiled and bowed to Lady Mary and Blanche, and then went and joined his friends at the further end of the room.

That was all Blanche saw, owing to the relative positions of the tables; and she could not, much as she wished to, actually turn round in her seat to see what was going on.

And when dinner was over, and Lady Mary rose to go, the little table was already empty, and the party had disappeared.

But when they got into the street, the Bath

chair was not very far ahead, and Blanche could see the trio distinctly. But the position she had imagined was entirely reversed. For it was the young girl who was in the chair, and the mother and Monsieur who were walking on either side!

Moreover, she saw now that she was a girl of not more than sixteen, an evident invalid.

“That is not the daughter I have met,” remarked Lady Mary.

“I suppose it is one of the younger ones.”

And so Blanche’s uneasiness vanished, and vanished for ever; for the next morning Monsieur arrived at his usual hour to say the Vansittarts had left F——.

Lady Vansittart was sure the place was not going to agree with her daughter, who had not slept a wink either night; and she had carried her off elsewhere.

“Yes,” he said, “they have taken flight. What would you like to do to-day? By the way, there is a dance at the “Cercle” to-night. Would you like to look in? It is rather amusing to watch the dancing.”

"We might go in for half-an-hour," said Lady Mary, "but I don't want to be late."

"Very well," he said. "Shall we dine at the 'Rocher,' and then come home to dress? You ladies need not make a regular evening toilette, but I must. That is the rule at these places."

The plan was accordingly carried out. They dined at the "Rocher," which meant *al fresco*. It was a lovely afternoon, and they drove home in the cool of the evening.

Blanche long remembered that drive. They were rather late, and they drove at a tremendous rate. The pace was exhilarating, the evening delicious: and she felt very happy.

The little scare about Miss Vansittart was over; and in front of her was the "Cercle," with all its possibilities.

At last she was going to meet him where there was a chance of dividing him and Lady Mary, and of having him to herself.

They were set down at their own door at a little after eight o'clock, and he went away

promising to return in good time to escort them, and to bring a fiacre with him.

Blanche felt quite excited as she dressed herself in a fresh little muslin gown, and took especial pains with her hair.

Then she went down into the sitting-room to await his arrival.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was nearly nine, and he had said he would be here a little after. She sat watching the clock, and every now and then going to the window which commanded a view of the little flagged courtyard which led up to the *appartement*. She knew she should hear the uneven tramp on the stones long before his figure came in sight, so that she would be able to withdraw from the window in time.

So she stationed herself there and waited.

Ten minutes past nine—a quarter past—half past—still no sign of him.

Lady Mary exclaimed at his unpunctuality, and then took up a book to while away the time. But Blanche was far too restless to read.

She stood at the window, straining eyes and ears to catch the first sight or sound, but, though the sound of footsteps every now and then made her pulses beat for a moment,

they were not those for which she was so eagerly waiting.

A quarter to ten. Blanche was beginning to feel a chill of disappointment. What could he be about? Why did he not come?

"He won't come now," said Lady Mary. "He must have forgotten all about it, or else been prevented. We had better give it up, and go to bed. I, for one, shall not be sorry."

"Oh no," said Blanche quickly; "not yet. It is not ten o'clock yet. He may still come."

"Are you so anxious to go to this dance?" asked Lady Mary, in some surprise. "I had no idea you would care about it. Well! we will wait ten minutes more then, and then we must really go to our beds. I am getting dreadfully sleepy, aren't you?"

But Blanche did not look at all sleepy. On the contrary, her eyes were bright, and her cheeks were flushed, and she looked very wide-awake indeed.

Ten o'clock.

"We will give him up now," said Lady Mary.

Blanche's heart sank, but she did not like

to remonstrate again. She prepared to obey. But just at that moment, in the distance she heard the, to her, unmistakable sound of the uneven tramp she knew so well; only quicker than usual, as of one walking in a great hurry. Nearer and nearer every moment the footsteps came—the familiar figure hove in sight, coming swiftly towards the "*appartement*;" and there was a sharp ring at the bell.

"Here he is!" said Blanche quietly, coming away from the window, and putting a strain upon herself to speak unconcernedly; but she had great difficulty in steadyng her voice, for her heart was beating fast.

"I beg ten thousand pardons," said Monsieur, entering the room. "How can I excuse myself for keeping you waiting all this time? I am ashamed to say I fell asleep after dressing, and woke to find it nearly ten. I am afraid you will think it too late to go now."

"Oh no," burst from Blanche, and he turned towards her in surprise.

"It is not too late, Mary, is it?" she said, and she waited with palpable anxiety for the

answer, her tell-tale face showing the eagerness she thought she was concealing.

Lady Mary looked at her watch. "It *is* very late," she said; "but we will go in for a little while, if you wish it."

"I have a fiacre at the door," said Monsieur; and a few minutes after they were on their way to the "Cercle."

The dance was in full swing when they arrived; and the scene was an animated one. People of divers nationalities were all dancing gaily, and the room was quite full.

While Monsieur went in search of seats for Lady Mary and Blanche, the latter watched the merry throng with interest.

He soon returned and took them to another part of the *salle*, where he established them in the seats he had secured. He himself did not sit down, but stood by them, making observations on what was going on all round.

Presently he asked Lady Mary if she would like to take a turn round the room, which offer she declined, upon which he resumed his position at her side, and continued to watch the dancers.

Blanche's hopes were fast fading, and her spirits sinking to zero. Evidently the invitation he had given to Lady Mary was not to be extended to her. Time was flying, and she knew her friend would not stay much longer; she would want to be going home soon.

A sense of deep depression began to steal over her; and she turned her head away from the gay scene, and wished she had never come. She was bitterly disappointed.

Just at that moment she heard his voice at her elbow.

"Miss Talbot," he said, "won't *you* come for a turn?"

Blanche tried to answer indifferently, and her voice and manner she succeeded in making quiet and cold: but the bright look of pleasure on her face she had no power over; nor had she any idea of it.

"You will excuse my dancing, I know," he said, as they walked away together. "I am afraid it would be rather a "hop and go one" sort of affair. I used to be a good dancer, but my infirmities now stand in my way. Let us sit down."

So saying he led her to a seat at the other end of the room, far from where they had left Lady Mary, and sat down.

Never had Blanche felt so shy. She was not as a rule troubled in that way at all; but the sudden realisation of her long wished-for desire paralysed her; and now that she was really quite alone with him for the first time since she had made his acquaintance, she could think of nothing to say!

Seldom had she felt so stupid, and also there had been in his remark about his waltzing a suspicion of a *double entendre* such as she had not heard since the early days, and she felt a little nervous. At the same time, she was so perfectly satisfied with her position that she would have been content to sit there any length of time, silent, with the Prince by her side. For his disguise was of course thrown off; and in evening dress and a white flower in his button-hole, he seemed more than usually a good-looking man, as well as a high-bred gentleman.

“Miss Talbot,” he said, “you are not in good spirits to-night. What is the matter? Are you tired?”

Blanche roused herself at once. "I am not the least tired," she answered, "and am ready to talk about anything you like."

"Well! Let us criticise the company," he said, turning upon her his laughing brown eyes, and looking full into her face.

Blanche felt alarmed. Taken with his remark just now, she began to have a vague dread of what might be coming.

"You are observant, I know," he went on, "and I am sure you will find food for your imaginative and artistic talents here. Look at that man out there. Do you see him?"

"What man?" she said, rather nervously.

"Out there," he said, indicating by a glance a sunburnt Frenchman who was dancing vigorously with a middle-aged lady. "I fear he is a *bon-vivant*," he said.

"Oh no," said Blanche hurriedly, hardly knowing what she said; "he is only sunburnt. His face is not really red."

"You have grown more charitable since your stay in a foreign watering-place," he said, still with that laugh in his eyes. "Or else you have grown used to the sight of these '*bon-*

vivants.' But I am more hard-hearted than you. I think that fellow is more than a *bon-vivant*—even worse than a *gourmet*. I fancy he is something of an inebriate, and has come here, in common with so many others, to undo ill effects by a course of waters and new habits of life. That is the worst of these places. You see so much of this kind of thing;—gouty fellows who have 'done themselves too well,' eaten up, positively eaten up, with gout. One cannot—at least ladies cannot—be too careful what acquaintances they make at foreign watering-places."

Blanche's head was turned away, and a burning blush was spreading itself all over her cheeks.

He went on in the same gaily bantering tone, until, struck by her continued silence, he tried to catch a sight of her face. Her head was still kept steadily turned away, for she was struggling to repress the tears which she felt rising in her eyes, and, to her dismay, in vain. She hastily and surreptitiously raised her handkerchief to her eyes for a moment.

But the little action did not escape him.

"Miss Talbot!" he exclaimed, in great distress, "forgive me! I was only joking."

He lightly laid his hand on hers for a moment.

"Forgive me," he said earnestly; "indeed I had no idea that what I said would distress you."

"Forgive me rather," burst from Blanche before she could stop herself. "Oh, I had so hoped all this time that you either had not overheard what I said, or else had forgiven and forgotten it. . . ."

"You really must come now, Blanche," said Lady Mary's voice close by. "It is so late, and I am so sleepy."

Blanche started; and rose hastily from her seat. Dazed and confused, she obeyed without a word. He also rose. He gave Lady Mary his arm, and Blanche followed them across the room, and through the passages to the entrance-door, where the fiacre was waiting.

He put Lady Mary in, and wished her good-night, refusing the lift she offered him, saying he would rather walk.

Then he turned to Blanche.

"Good-night, Miss Talbot," she heard him say in his usual manner, as he put her into the carriage; but for a moment he took her hand and held it; while he said in an undertone,

"Forgiven and forgotten as if *you* had never said it; as if I had never overheard. Do not think of it again, I beg you. Only promise me one thing! Do me the justice to believe me when I say that you were entirely mistaken."

Blanche made an incoherent murmur, and then she was swept off in the fiacre, and was driven back full speed to the *appartement*, feeling as if all that had just happened was a dream.

"Well! that was a dull little experience," said Lady Mary, yawning; "it certainly was not worth sitting up for, was it?"

A telegram lay on the table in the sitting-room, announcing that Rupert would arrive the following afternoon, as he was coming by day instead of by night.

It was several hours sooner than she had expected; and Blanche went to bed in a very disturbed state of mind.

She slept very little. Perplexing thoughts of all sorts and kinds coursed through her head all night, and her brain was in a turmoil. But through all her sense of complications in store, through all her sense of uneasiness and fear, there was mixed a feeling of elation, of something almost like triumph. The touch of a hand, the tones of a voice, lingered in her recollection, and the words kept on sounding in her ears, "Promise me one thing. Believe me when I say"

Believe! She would believe anything he chose to say.

Promise! She felt at that moment, that in spite of brother, father, mother, in spite of knowing nothing about him, whatever might be his name, his position, his past or his present circumstances, she could have promised him anything he had liked to ask her!

CHAPTER IX.

MORNING dawned. She rose early, for she was too restless to lie still, and was dressed before her usual time.

She felt very nervous, and shrank even from meeting Lady Mary. But that most unobservant of chaperons did not refer in the most distant way to the evening before.

Her thoughts, to Blanche's intense relief, were entirely on her own coming journey, about which she had received a letter from her husband last night, and two telegrams this morning.

They went to the Wells as usual; and, as usual, Monsieur, as in her own mind Blanche still preferred to call him, was waiting for them. She hardly dared glance at him; but there was nothing very different in his outward manner as he shook hands, though he looked rather scrutinisingly at her.

Lady Mary promptly took complete possession of him; consulted him as to her journey, told him about her telegrams, and ended by saying that as Blanche's brother was coming this afternoon, sooner than they had expected him, she would be able to start homewards early next morning, as Blanche would be in safe hands.

He did not appear to take any particular interest in the information, though Blanche fancied his brow contracted for a moment; but, with his usual sympathetic kindness, he threw himself into Lady Mary's affairs, and suggested various things to assist her in her arrangements.

He walked back with them to the door of the *appartement*, but he made no plan for the day, as usual. But, at his customary hour, a little later on in the morning, his step was heard on the staircase, and he entered the room where they were drawing and reading.

He came straight up to Lady Mary and sat down.

"I have come to say good-bye," he said. "I am going to-day."

Blanche, taken unawares, started, got first red and then pale; but she controlled as well as she could the blank feeling of disappointment which rose within her at this announcement.

As Rupert did not come till the late afternoon, she had thought that at least one more day, or part of a day, still lay before her, in which she might give herself up to the enjoyment of the present, without any thought of the future; and her hopes were now rudely and suddenly dashed to the ground. The disappointment was so keen that she had to bite her lips fiercely to keep down the tears which she felt might at any moment come into her eyes.

Lady Mary took only a very limited interest in his news. She was going herself. It did not seem to matter much.

“Quite a break-up!” she said. “We shall all be going our different ways about the same time.”

He remained talking a little longer, and then rose to go.

“Good-bye, Lady Mary,” he said, “and thank you a thousand times for all your friendliness and

kindness. It has contributed immensely to the enjoyment of my stay at F——.”

Lady Mary now woke up, and rose to the occasion. She warmly reciprocated his thanks. The advantage had been all on their side, she said. What should they have done without him? It had made the whole difference to *their* stay! And she looked to Blanche to corroborate her statement. But Blanche's words were not ready. She hardly said anything. He looked keenly at her, and this made her feel all the more constrained and stiff, and powerless to say anything pleasant.

“We shall meet in London,” said Lady Mary, in the conventional manner.

“I hardly think so,” he said; “my lines are not much laid in England now, but thank-you very much all the same.”

“Well, if ever you come, mind you come and see me,” said Lady Mary. “I should like you to know my husband, and to show you my little flock.”

He looked at his watch, and thanked her again.

“I must be off,” he said. “I have some things

to see to, and my train starts in about an hour. Good-bye again, Lady Mary."

He shook hands with her warmly and then advanced to Blanche.

"Good-bye, Miss Talbot."

She put her hand into his without a word, and he held it for a moment in his.

She looked up, and met the full glance of his eyes with their kindest expression.

A still softer look came into them, enhancing the singular beauty of his countenance.

Lady Mary had gone to the other end of the room to collect her photographs for packing.

"Good-bye!" he said in a low voice; "it has been a pleasant little phase in life, and I am sorry it is over! Farewell!"

And the next moment he was gone. The door had closed behind him, and she could hear the halting steps she had learned to listen for so eagerly, descending the wooden stairs, and getting fainter and fainter in the distance.

She stood quite still where he had left her, the tears rising, and a sense of dull pain stealing

over her. She was alarmed lest Lady Mary should turn round and see.

But Lady Mary was looking at one of her children's photographs before she packed it, as if she had never seen it before.

"I am not at all sure," she said at last, as she turned towards Blanche, who by this time had recovered her self-possession, "I am not at all sure after all that I don't like the profile one of Tiny better than the full face. What do you say?"

It was with a strange sense of wonder that Blanche heard her friend's little ripple of remarks at that moment. It seemed to her so extraordinary that the parting which meant so much to her, should be so totally without meaning to Lady Mary.

And yet *she* had been his friend!

She escaped from the room as soon as she could, for she wanted to be alone and think.

For her own sake, in view of the complications and difficulties she saw arising before her by Rupert's presence among them, his going was a kind of relief, or she had thought so for a

minute; but she found, to her own dismay, that the pain of his departure far outweighed the thought of anything else. All other thoughts were for the time merged in this, as she said to herself, "Gone! Gone!"

But, worse than the pain of the parting, worse even than the thought that she would never see him again, was the dull sense of mistrust and suspicion which she felt slowly rising within her.

He did not want to meet Rupert.

Of that she was quite convinced.

Otherwise why this sudden departure? For she was sure he had not intended to go to-day.

No! he had only settled to do so since they had met him at the Wells in the morning, and Lady Mary had told him about Rupert's telegram.

There was a mystery about his acquaintance with Rupert!

How strange his manner had been the day when Rupert's name had escaped him! He had seemed like a person who had said what he had not intended to say; he had looked

distinctly perturbed when, in answer to his question, she had told him Rupert was coming to F——, and he had never mentioned his name since. . . . And if he did not want to meet Rupert, *what* could the reason be? Did Rupert know something about him something he did not wish her and Lady Mary to know something *against* him? Her heart sank within her.

After all, how little, how very little, she really knew about him!

These were her feelings one moment; the next, in loyalty to her hero, she tried with all her might to chase her misgivings away.

The day wore on in its usual fashion—the baths, the water, the *déjeuner*, the sitting out in the afternoon—but a heavy flatness hung over everything.

There was no interest, no excitement, anywhere; nothing but a sense of miss and loss and emptiness.

The place was full of memories. It was haunted by the thought of him; there was no getting away from it for a moment; so much

was every spot connected with his presence, so entirely was he identified with every enjoyment.

She could hardly believe he was really gone. She kept on fancying they must see him somewhere.

The Jardins were haunted by his figure, his step, his voice.

A crunch on the gravel startled her, a figure walking at all lame in the distance made her heart leap, every air the band played held an association.

She began to feel thankful Rupert *was* coming; for he would take her away.

"Flat as a pancake, isn't it?" said Lady Mary, as they sat listening to the afternoon band. "Even you, Blanche, must realise now what a thing it was for us to meet such a pleasant man as that at a dull place like F——, even though his name *was* Brown!" she added with a little laugh.

Fortunately, Lady Mary did not wait for answers to her remarks, but rippled on to some-

thing else; for Blanche felt quite incapable of making any.

Sitting there, with the strains of the band to which they had so often listened together falling upon her ears, regretful thoughts were filling her mind.

... Should she ever see him again, she wondered? or would he be for ever and ever, and for all time to come, only a recollection, a fading memory, as the long years went by? *He* was evidently content that it should be so.

“It has been a pleasant little phase in life, and I am sorry it is over” . . .

No doubt in his experience he had often and often had such “pleasant little phases in life”;—often made such friendships before; and, who knows? . . . unmade them just as readily and easily.

How universal his friendships had been at the hotel where she had first watched him! Perhaps it was just his way.

“Rupert’s train is almost due,” said Lady Mary’s voice, breaking in upon Blanche’s sad

reflections; "we had better be going towards the station."

Accordingly they left the Jardins, and took their way through the town.

They had not gone very far down the little street before the tall figure of a good-looking young man came in sight.

He walked with a quick, energetic step; but his face, for such a young fellow, had a languid air of sadness about it. The expression was rather a peculiar one, like that of a person to whom some unwelcome thought is always present. It, as it were, overlaid his natural expression, which was of the high-spirited, careless kind, which, as a rule, distinguishes our "*jeunesse dorée*."

But his grave face relaxed into a smile at the sight of his sister, who left Lady Mary and hurried on to meet him.

On Blanche's face the same sort of expression was lurking. And she looked and felt very nervous. She was shy of meeting her confidential brother just now, with this world of new thoughts within her; and she felt as if he must

guess something had happened since they last met.

A veil of reserve seemed to have fallen between them. He had his secret; she had hers.

"Hallo! Blanchie!" he said, in a kind, brotherly way. "Here I am, you see. How are you? You look rather pale."

"I am quite well," she said nervously. "It has been a very hot day. Did you not find it so in the train?"

"Awful!" he replied, taking off his hat as he spoke, and pushing back his wavy hair from his forehead. "I was wishing all the time I had come by night instead of day. (How Blanche re-echoed the wish!) Ah! Lady Mary, how are you?" he added, for they had come up with her.

They walked with him to the door of his hotel, where they left him, appointing him to meet them, when he was ready, at the "Royale," where they had settled to dine.

"My dear Blanche," said Lady Mary, when they were alone again, "Rupert *has* altered!"

"Do you think so?" said Blanche.

"Do *I* think so!" ejaculated Lady Mary. "Well! don't you?"

"He looks just as he did when I last saw him," said Blanche, guardedly.

"Well, I have not seen him for a year, you know," rejoined Lady Mary; "and I think he is extraordinarily changed. He looks so grave and depressed. His spirits were his great charm, and they seem to have quite gone. Depend upon it, my dear, he is in love."

But, by dinner-time, Lady Mary had forgotten all about Rupert's low spirits; for she was full of her impending journey, and plied him with questions all through the repast as to the different little details of the route.

An immense impetus was given to her conversation when she found he had actually met and spoken to her husband the day before he started, and that he had a note from him for her.

She wanted to know exactly how he was

looking, whether the heat and confinement of the House seemed to have told upon him, etc.

Rupert, of course, had taken a very wide and general view of Colonel Fitzroy and his appearance; his glance at him having been of the most cursory kind, and equally of course he had left the letter in his other coat pocket.

So they had to walk back to his hotel after dinner to get it on their way to the band; and in it Lady Mary became completely absorbed, more especially as she found it wanted an answer.

She therefore decided to go home, and to leave the brother and sister to go on to the Jardins without her; which they accordingly did; and sitting down together, Rupert proceeded to give Blanche news of home, father, mother, etc.

“And what about the ‘Man with the Limp?’” he said, when he had come to an end of his budget.

Blanche started. It was so long since she had used the sobriquet, that for a moment she hardly knew who Rupert was speaking of, and, when she realised, felt slightly indignant!

The suddenness of the question, as well as the way it was put, took away from her her power of self-control for a moment.

“What about whom?” she repeated.

“The gouty man, with the limp, you wrote to mother about when you first arrived, who Lady Mary would be so much too friendly with. Mother showed me the letter, and I was very much amused with it. You seemed so thoroughly disgusted, and you so exactly described the sort of fellow one meets at these water-drinking places. I felt I knew him by your description, A talking man with a gouty walk and blue goggles! And we said, ‘Poor Blanche! She has gone all that way to find only this!’ But I hope matters mended a bit as time went on. Mother said when I last saw her that your letters had a ring of enjoyment in them which they had not had at first. Did you find or make any other friends?”

“No,” said Blanche . . . “but, Rupert . . . I am sure I never said a gouty walk.”

“No, probably not,” he laughed, “but something equivalent. Were you able to keep Lady Mary’s sociability in check?”

"She liked him," said Blanche, evasively, "and thought him agreeable . . . So did I in the end," she added, her natural truthfulness asserting itself over her desire to keep her brother's suspicions averted, "and we saw a good deal of him."

"Oh! you did, did you?" said Rupert. "What was his name?"

Blanche hesitated.

"His name was Brown," she answered; and she looked anxiously at her brother as she added, "He said he had met you, Rupert."

Her voice was a little unsteady. She was really trembling with anxiety to see what he would say, and to find out what he might know. It was a crucial moment to her.

She felt exceedingly nervous as to what she might be going to hear. But no gleam of intelligence came into Rupert's face. He shook his head:

"It is a name one has heard before!" he said lightly. "But *I* personally know no one but my tailor who answers to it. No! I have not the honour of your Mr. Brown's acquaintance, nor, from your description, do I particu-

larly covet it—this broken-down fellow with the game leg, and blue goggles. Did he *say* he knew me?"

"He said he had met you," faltered Blanche, "and . . . and he called you Rupert when he spoke of you."

"I am much obliged to him," said Rupert, "and all I can say is that more people know Tom Fool than Tom Fool knows."

Blanche said no more. She felt quite out of heart and dispirited; and was glad when the band was over, and she found herself in her own room, alone with her perplexed thoughts and her now renewed misgivings.

CHAPTER X.

THE next morning all was bustle and preparation for an early departure.

Lady Mary was to start with them, and go by the same train for some way. After that their paths lay apart.

Blanche had thought she would have been glad to leave F——; but when the moment came, she felt that though it was pain to be there, it was still greater pain to go. It seemed like breaking the last links that she had with him. Good-bye to the little room so full of his presence and the pleasant conversations held there! good-bye to the little wooden stairs of the *appartement*, still ringing with the sound of his halting footsteps! good-bye as they drove along to the long promenade by the Wells, the seats under the trees each holding some memory!

Well! It was all over and done with; and by midday she and Rupert, having parted

with Lady Mary at the Junction, were rattling away towards Switzerland, leaving the last three weeks behind, all packed away into the past, a thing which had already become a recollection:—

“. . . . A memory—nothing more!”

She was young enough to feel this keenly; and there was a dull ache at her heart as she lay back in her seat, watching the country fly past, while the remorseless train bore her farther and farther away from all her cherished reminiscences.

They arrived at their destination very late, after a long and fatiguing journey, and went at once to bed.

She woke to find herself in the unfamiliar scenery of Switzerland. It did not take her fancy.

The great mountains all round and the sense of their vastness had a depressing effect upon her. She shivered a little as she looked out of her window, and thought how gloomy and frowning they looked, towering over all.

While she was dressing, her eye fell upon a little table in the distance, where her maid

had already arranged her books and drawing-materials.

The sight of her portfolio brought a recollection to her mind. There, inside it, was her hidden portrait, all she had left in a tangible shape to remind her of what had been. She was suddenly seized with such a longing to look at it again that she could hardly wait till her maid had gone out of the room. She felt quite irritated at the slow and leisurely way in which the maid moved about the room, giving finishing touches to various little arrangements in a way that seemed to Blanche wholly unnecessary.

But at length these operations came to an end. The door closed behind her, and Blanche was alone at last.

Eagerly she took up her portfolio, untied the strings, and sorted the sketches till she came to the one she wanted. Then she took it out, and, carrying it to the window to get it into a good light, she gazed at it long and attentively.

It was almost like meeting him again!

The kind brown eyes, with their softest ex-

pression, were looking straight at her. She had tried so hard to get this look into them, and now here it was!

Indeed the whole drawing bore the traces of hard and steady work. There was no longer any vagueness about the outlines of the head and face, and the features were painted carefully in.

And the result was, that there stood out of the canvas an exact reproduction, a most striking likeness, of the man of whom her thoughts were full.

She hardly knew how lifelike her steady work at it had made it, till she saw it standing out thus before her, in the full light of the clear atmosphere.

She forgot all her misgivings as she gazed at it.

Could such a countenance as that hold behind it anything unworthy, anything about which there could be suspicion or distrust? No! It was impossible!

She would have stood there transfixed for a much longer time had she not heard Rupert's step in the passage; and the next moment he knocked at her door.

She started, and put the drawing hastily down upon the table; for there was not time to restore it to the portfolio, as she would have liked to do.

Then she walked to the door, opened it, and Rupert entered.

“The *table d'hôte* breakfast is at nine, he said, after he had wished her good-morning, and asked her if she had had a good night. “Are you ready to go down?”

“What a nice room!” he added. “What do you look out on?” And he went to the window to look at the view.

Blanche felt very nervous. She was particularly anxious he should not see the sketch. She dreaded any questions. But she felt sure his eye must fall upon it if he went so near the table in the window; and she was trying to persuade herself that if she said it was a “fancy portrait,” in answer to his probable enquiry, she would be within the bounds of truth.

But while she was still debating the question in her own mind, she was startled by a sudden exclamation from her brother, half of astonishment, half of eager curiosity.

"Blanchie!" he exclaimed in tones of impetuous and breathless excitement, "how in the world did you get this picture?"

In the stress of the moment Blanche answered quite quietly and simply; her innate truthfulness asserting itself over every other consideration.

"I did it," she said.

"*You* did it!" he repeated. "When and where have you met Launcelot Sackville?"

"I have not," she replied. "That is not the name of the original of that portrait. That is Mr. Brown."

"Don't talk nonsense!" he said. "Do you suppose I don't know Launcelot Sackville when I see him?"

He seemed more excited than the occasion warranted, and his palpable agitation made Blanche calm.

"I can only say he told me his name was Brown," she said.

"Brown!" exclaimed Rupert, impatiently. "Rubbish! He must have been laughing at you."

"Perhaps he has got a double," said Blanche on the spur of the moment; and, as she spoke,

it flashed across her that this might be an explanation of everything.

“Launcelot Sackville could never have a double,” said Rupert in a low voice; “there could never be another like him. Nature broke the mould.”

Then he suddenly broke off in what he was saying, and turned almost fiercely upon her.

“You don’t mean to tell me,” he said sharply, pointing to the picture, “that *this* is the man you wrote to mother about? *Not* the man you described to her in your letter?”

Blanche was quite frightened at his vehemence, and the gathering cloud upon his brow; but she answered in the affirmative.

“Oh my God!” he exclaimed, “is that the impression he gives?”

“No,” said Blanche in a low, firm voice, “it was a false and mistaken impression, and it did not last. Never has anyone repented, as I have done, a hasty and superficial judgment.” She stopped, alarmed at the admission she was making.

But Rupert was not even listening.

"So *this*," he said, "is the man who, but for Lady Mary, you would have *refused to know?*" . . .

He paused a minute, and then added:

"Then let me tell you that you would have refused to know one of the best and noblest fellows that ever lived!"

Blanche was silent, but she was conscious of a great bound within her at his words, and of a sense of pride and satisfaction which entirely obliterated all personal mortification at her brother's implied rebuke.

Rupert walked up and down the room for a few moments, and then stopped short, closer to where Blanche was standing.

"I thought," he said bitterly, "that women were always drawn to anyone with an affliction of any sort; moved by those gentle feelings of pity and tenderness which are inborn in all women worthy the name. I am sorry to find *my* sister is an exception in this particular, and should be wanting in that compassionate womanliness which constitutes so large a part of the charm of her sex . . . Did it ever occur to you

that the infirmities you so derided might be the result of an accident?"

Blanche shook her head.

"Listen to me, then," he said. "A year ago, Launcelot Sackville was a splendid shot, a splendid rider, excelled in every manly exercise, was full of pluck and dash, careless of hardships, indifferent to danger: in short, was all that we men admire in each other, and a hero among men for that reason. One day an appalling accident befel him, which almost cost him his life . . ."

Rupert paused and looked away out of the window to the distant mountains, but not as if he really saw them; and he went on as if talking more to himself than to her. "He started on that expedition in the fulness of health and spirits, the keenest of the whole party, full of life, energy, and enjoyment; outdoing all the rest in his tireless activity . . . He was brought back from it the mere wreck of a man: maimed, shattered, half dead! . . ."

"But he recovered?" faltered Blanche.

"Yes," said Rupert, bitterly, "his life was spared, if that was what you mean by recovery.

But his life, in so far as he or any other man would consider life worth the name, was at an end. He recovered! But to what? To find himself deprived of almost every power he possessed, debarred from every manly exercise, from ever again leading an active life; his health ruined, his career blasted. Life, from his point of view, it could hardly be called. It was just existence . . .”

There was a silence. Rupert seemed quite overcome; and Blanche's face was hidden.

Her overstrained nerves could bear no more, and as Rupert seemed about to begin again, she interrupted him.

“Rupert,” she said, with a break in her voice, “I cannot imagine what all this means, nor why you should blame me so bitterly.”

“No,” said Rupert, with sudden remorse, “of course you cannot; and *I* cannot explain. We had better drop the subject at once and for ever. And, better still, come down to breakfast. You must be getting quite faint.”

And, so saying, he turned to the door, and Blanche mechanically followed him.

CHAPTER XI.

At a little "*table apart*" in one of the windows of the *salle* downstairs, was a family party, whose appearance formed a strong and pleasing contrast to that of the tourists from all the four quarters of the globe, at the long table in the middle of the room.

It consisted of father, mother and two young daughters.

The father was a fine-looking man of middle age; and the two girls were strikingly pretty.

No one who looked at their lovely complexions and grey eyes, shaded by long, dark lashes, could doubt for a moment from what country they came.

Sir Dermot Fitzcarrick was an impoverished Irish landlord, come abroad from motives of economy; and, to judge by his conversation with his wife and daughters, he had rather got the

subject on the brain. For he appeared to be able to talk of nothing but rents, retrenchment and money—or rather the want of it. His wife had a weary air, as if tired of these topics—as indeed, poor woman, she was.

She was sorry for him, but, at the same time, she realised that he had got his affairs on his nerves, and rather exaggerated the necessity for retrenchment. She hardly thought such a drastic measure was needed as the one he had so suddenly decided upon, *i.e.*, shutting up their place in Ireland for the whole winter, and coming abroad to economise for six months.

She could not bear to see her girls deprived of all their usual interests and pleasures, and banished from their much-loved home just at the time of year when they enjoyed it most; and she had fought against her husband's decision as long as she could; putting in a plea for their young daughters.

“We have had *our* life,” she had said, “now let the young ones have theirs.”

But her plea had been useless, and had only made him angry. She was accused of working

against him, and encouraging her girls in extravagance.

The girls themselves, meantime, looked far from dejected, and chaffed their father about his "stinginess," all through breakfast.

They were dressed in Irish homespun walking-suits; and had alpenstocks by their sides. They were going to start on a mountaineering expedition directly breakfast was over.

For Lady Fitzcarrick, determined that if they were to be deprived of all their home pleasures, they should at least take advantage of any that could be afforded by their stay abroad, organised daily expeditions for them; to which Sir Dermot, who had been a mountain climber in his youth, offered no objection.

This expedition was to be a rather more extended one than usual, as a sunrise as well as a sunset was the object in view. Lady Fitzcarrick was not going herself; and she was hoping to devote the leisure afforded her by the absence of her husband and daughters to going thoroughly into their household expenses, and making out such a table of income and expenditure as would convince her husband that

there was not really any need for the monetary panic which had seized him at the end of the London season.

By-and-by, at the door of the *salle*, appeared the tall figures of Rupert and Blanche Talbot, also forming a remarkable contrast to the other people in the room. The brother and sister were no doubt a handsome pair. Several present looked up with admiration at the young English girl, as, her slight graceful figure drawn up, and her head erect, Blanche passed along.

The eyes of Kathleen, the younger and prettier of the Fitzcarrick girls, fell upon the new-comers as they entered the *salle*, and a flush of excitement heightened for a moment the lovely colour in her cheek.

“Why! there are Captain Talbot and his sister!” she exclaimed.

At the same moment, Rupert uttered an exclamation of genuine pleasure, and advanced to the table.

The pleasure of the recognition was evidently mutual. Indeed the whole party showed unfeigned satisfaction at the sight of the Talbots;

and room was at once made for them at the little table.

“Oh! Captain Talbot!” said Kathleen. “*How* glad I am we have met you! We are so tired of our own society, and we go on talking of the same things over and over again. Really four is too large a family party for travelling, don’t you think so?”

“What brings you abroad at this time of year?” he asked, smiling, as he took a seat by her side.

“You may well ask,” she replied; “we have come from what Papa calls ‘motives of economy.’ Captain Talbot,” she continued, “I am going to ask you a riddle. Do you know what is the difference between reason and treason, and the cause of half the distress in Ireland?”

“No,” answered Rupert—“what is it? I never guessed a riddle in my life, Miss Kathleen.”

“*He* is,” she answered, indicating her father, “the ‘absent T,’ you know. Don’t you think it is very wrong and unpatriotic of him to shut up Castle Carrick and come and spend all his money abroad? *I* do.”

"You know nothing whatever about it," said Sir Dermot. "I shall save an enormous sum. Why, our bill here for the week, including everything, is about a tenth of what the household books are at home, for eating and drinking alone—*alone*," he added severely, with a glance at his wife.

"Do you know, Captain Talbot," Kathleen broke in again, "Papa has been undertaking the remodelling of the household since we got back to Castle Carrick from London, 'putting it,' as he says, 'on a different footing, on a new and economic basis.' He has been taking it into his own hands. And, oh! we have been so uncomfortable! Everything ran short, and all our nicest servants gave warning. What he wanted, he said, was to 'trace the extravagance of the household to its root'; he had long been determined to do so. And he was successful. He traced it to—to what, do you think?"

"I have no idea," said Rupert, smiling at her.

"He traced it to the little wax taper with which the footmen lighted the lamps in the

passages! He did, really. You should have seen him standing with the poor little offending taper in his hand, declaiming against the extravagance which its use denoted. He really got quite eloquent over it. 'It was not so much the thing itself,' he said, 'but it showed the *tone* of the house, the general recklessness which ran through the whole establishment. It was monstrous! when the merest old envelope, the shred of a letter, or a twisted bit of newspaper, would do every bit as well!' So a general order was issued that no more tapers were to be used, but that in future spills were to be made out of yesterday's newspapers. And then a day or two after he wanted to refer to a speech which had been very fully reported in the *Times*—(between ourselves, I believe it was one of his own!)—and found the *Times* had been made up into spills 'by Sir Dermot's own orders!'"

Here Lady Fitzcarrick made a movement as if to check her daughter; but Sir Dermot did not seem at all to object to the girl's stories against him, and Kathleen went on.

"Well, then he took to insisting on seeing

the 'Stores List' before it went. He was sure, judging by the taper, that there were many other things which could be dispensed with. Existence (he observed) could go on, and go on quite as happily, without so many little luxuries as the study of that 'Stores List' brought to light. He wanted (he said) to teach the house-keeper the difference between *luxuries* and *necessaries*: a difference which she, at present, failed to perceive. And even necessities, he saw, were ordered in unlimited quantities. Quite half the amount, he felt sure, might, *with care*, be made to do. So he took a pen and marked the list. Some things he scratched out entirely, and others he marked 'half.' And do you know, Captain Talbot, the oil for the lamps 'gave out' before the end of the month, and we sat in the dark all one evening! Fancy the joy of the butler when he was told the lamps were burning badly, and could not have been properly trimmed; and he was able to say it was all the oil he had got in the house till the new stores came in! I felt for the man. I should so have enjoyed it myself."

"Oh! Kathleen!" said her mother, "how you do run on!"

"I'll stop in a minute, Mamma dear, but I must tell one more of Papa's economies; the best of all, I think. He was told, Captain Talbot, that he could get cigarettes at the Army and Navy Stores a penny cheaper than at his usual place; so he said he would go there himself, and get half-a-dozen to try. And he took a hansom there and back, which he kept waiting all the time he was examining and choosing his cigarettes. Our house is in Manchester Square; and the 'Stores,' as you know, are in Westminster!"

Blanche was very grateful to the girl; for she saw that Rupert was enjoying her conversation. His brow had cleared, and it was evident that a complete change had been given to his thoughts. She felt as if a mountain had been lifted off her shoulders; for as she followed her brother down the stairs and through the many passages to the *salle*, she had been inwardly wondering, with a kind of despair, how she and Rupert were to go on together for the next fortnight.

She had thought with something like dismay of the dual solitude stretching out before them,

which, when she had left England, had formed one of her pleasantest anticipations; and her one hope now was, that they might fall in with someone, no matter how dull and uninteresting, just to make a third; just to break the *tête-à-tête*, which had suddenly become so irksome and painful.

Her relief therefore may be better imagined than described, when, on entering the *salle*, she had espied the Fitzcarricks sitting in the window.

She had only a slight acquaintance with them herself, having been introduced to them by Rupert for the first time this Season in London; but he had been quartered in Dublin all the winter, and had paid more than one visit to Castle Carrick. As breakfast went on, she found herself cherishing a secret hope that Rupert would be asked to join the mountaineering expedition, which was to take place directly the meal was over. She felt quite unequal to the task of entertaining him to-day; and she was longing for leisure for thought, and the repose of her own society.

Presently the invitation was given, and was,

of course, extended to her; which was not at all what she had intended. However, she at once excused herself, on the ground of being too tired after her long journey.

Rupert glanced at her a little anxiously; but backed her up in her refusal, saying that he thought it would perhaps be better for her to take a little rest the first day. Any other time, he added, she would be ready for any amount of fatigue.

It was accordingly settled that she should be left at home, under the care of Lady Fitzcarrick. Blanche was more than satisfied with this arrangement. She felt no sort of effort would be required of her by that poor harassed-looking lady, and that she would be left to her own devices.

Rupert, however, was apparently not quite easy in his mind about her.

“Are you sure you don’t mind being left alone, Blanchie?” he managed to say to her in an undertone, as all the party rose from the table; Sir Dermot having said it was quite time to be thinking about getting their things together and making a start.

Blanche assured her brother she would be quite happy with Lady Fitzcarrick; and he hurried away in obedience to Sir Dermot's injunction.

Blanche did not follow him. She was anxious to avoid any chance of a renewal of that *tête-à-tête*.

And so, in about a quarter of an hour, the party started; Sir Dermot calling out that no one was to expect them till they saw them, and at earliest not until late to-morrow evening.

Lady Fitzcarrick and Blanche stood at the hotel door watching them until they were out of sight; the one being as much relieved as the other to see the four figures vanishing in the distance.

Then Lady Fitzcarrick turned to Blanche with a smile.

“Well, my dear Miss Talbot,” she said kindly, “you and I must entertain each other as best we can. But I am afraid you will find it very dull.”

Blanche assured her she should not be the least dull. She had plenty to do; letters to write, drawings to finish, books, etc., etc. She

only hoped Lady Fitzcarrick would not let her be in her way.

The answer was a great relief to Lady Fitzcarrick, who had, in reality, been rather dismayed to find herself saddled with a girl to amuse, just as she had got rid of her own. Finding Blanche so little "*exigeante*" she confided to her her plans; adding that later on she would be delighted to take her out, and do anything she liked to do. They therefore by mutual consent separated for the rest of the morning.

Blanche sought the privacy of her own bedroom; and poor Lady Fitzcarrick embarked on that stormy sea of calculation known to all who have ever tried to dovetail their income and their expenditure, and arrange it under different heads; an operation which almost inevitably ends in a few pounds being left for what goes under the head of "Sundries"—which "sundries," as a rule, represent all Life's unforeseen emergencies!

CHAPTER XII.

ONCE by herself, and in her own room again, Blanche sank down with a deep sigh of relief into a chair by the window, and gave herself up, as she had been longing to do for the last hour or more, to thinking over all she had heard and learnt since the morning.

Her most prominent feeling, in spite of everything, was intense satisfaction. Her hero, she reflected with a throb of joy and pride, was "*sans reproche!*"

She had been right to trust that fine open countenance; to pin her faith to that frank and trustworthy expression, in spite of appearances having been so against him. She felt so proud and happy as she remembered those words of her brother's, spoken with a depth of feeling very unusual for Rupert to display: "There could never be another like him. Nature broke the mould."

"Oh! what could it all mean?" she wondered. What could the circumstances be which had power to move Rupert in this way, to agitate and excite him, and to make him speak and act in a way so unlike himself? However, it was no use wondering. She could find no clue; nor was she, she knew, in the least likely to do so.

Her mind reverted to the joy of thinking of how all her misgivings were at rest. She was willing to leave everything else. . . . Except one thing. *Why had he told her his name was Brown?* Why, that is, had he gone out of his way to tell her what was not true? What reason could he have had for doing so? It was so unlike him to be untruthful.

Rupert's explanation, recurring suddenly to her mind at this moment, did not please her at all: "He must have been laughing at you." *Was he? Could he have been?*

She remembered now the amused look in his eyes as he made her the announcement. Her pride suddenly rose. But happening at this moment to glance at the clock, a change was given to her ideas. For she saw that it only wanted a very little while to the hour when the English

post went out; and she had not yet written home to announce her safe arrival in Switzerland.

Resolutely forcing her thoughts out of the channel in which they were flowing, she sat down to write her letters.

Lady Fitzcarrick and Blanche met towards luncheon, and then went out for a walk, with the ostensible object of gathering Alpine flowers. But neither of them paid much attention to the flowers. Lady Fitzcarrick was full of her own affairs, which she poured into the girl's ears; and Blanche was very abstracted. But Lady Fitzcarrick never noticed how silent and thoughtful her young companion was. She was only wondering how soon she could decently bring the walk to an end, and return to her calculations.

“Are not the sunsets wonderfully beautiful here?” enquired Blanche presently, when Lady Fitzcarrick paused for a moment.

“Eh?” said Lady Fitzcarrick, absently, “Sunsets? Oh yes, lovely, beautiful, quite splendid.”

"Which is the best place to see them from?" said Blanche.

"Well," said Lady Fitzcarrick, rather hastily, "do you know I think one sees them just as well from the windows or the terrace of the hotel as anywhere else?"

She was quite unaware of her own motive in saying this (as unaware as is the husband returning from a day in London who tells his wife there is "nothing *whatever* in the evening papers," because he has forgotten to buy her one at the station, as she had asked him to do).

But Blanche was not so blind. She saw the hidden motive at once, and realised that Lady Fitzcarrick was dreadfully afraid of being kept out till after sunset. And as she was already feeling she must be a great incubus to the poor lady, she answered at once: "Oh yes, I daresay one does. Let us go back now, so as to be in good time for it."

Lady Fitzcarrick seemed greatly relieved.

"It will not be for another hour or so yet," she said; "but still it is just as well to go home-wards. I wonder," she added, "if you would do

something for me when we get back, which will help me very much?"

"Oh, certainly, if I can," said Blanche, but rather doubtfully. She was afraid she was going to be asked to do accounts, which she was not at all good at.

"There is an old lady in the hotel quite alone," said Lady Fitzcarrick, "with whom I generally go and sit for a little while at this time of the day. She is an invalid, and does not get out much, except in the morning. Now, if you would go and sit with her, instead of me, to-day, it would be doing her a kindness and would be a great relief to me; as I should be glad to get off. She is a nice old lady, and I am sure you will like her. Perhaps you may know her—Lady Nuthurst. Do you, by chance?"

"Nuthurst?" repeated Blanche, "No, I don't think I have ever heard the name before."

"She is Irish by birth," said Lady Fitzcarrick, "and that has made a little bond between us; otherwise I never knew her till I came here. We will go up to her sitting-room to see her, and then you shall stay with

her, if you will, and I will go back to my work."

"Oh, I will, certainly," said Blanche, "if you think she would like it."

"Yes, I am sure she would. You will not find her difficult to talk to; very light in hand, especially if you get her off on her own belongings! She is one of those people who think everyone that belongs to her is perfect, and will talk to you by the hour about their perfections. I don't know how it is, and I suppose it shows one is rather ill-natured; but that sort of thing always, I think, sends one the other way. There is something in human nature which rebels against people overpraising their own, and thinking all their geese are swans. It is very tiresome to listen to. Don't you think so?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Blanche. "I think I like people to talk about what really interests them."

"Oh, very well," laughed Lady Fitzcarrick; "then you will be quite satisfied with Lady Nuthurst's form of conversation."

Blanche, who had been listening patiently all through the walk to the praises of Eily and

Kathleen Fitzcarrick (sandwiched in between the details of Lady Fitzcarrick's household difficulties under her husband's alterations in the establishment), was conscious of the very feeling just described as the effect on oneself of such talk. She began to question in her own mind whether Eily and Kathleen *were* such very perfect daughters after all; and to find herself ranged on old Lady Nuthurst's side. Why should she not talk of her own belongings as well as Lady Fitzcarrick?

On their return to the hotel, they went up to Lady Nuthurst's sitting-room, and Blanche was introduced to a pleasant-looking little old lady, who received her very kindly and seemed pleased to make her acquaintance.

The room in which she was sitting was full of little English comforts and pretty things which could not belong to the hotel. It was evident that its occupant carried a good deal about with her; "cushioned the corners of her life;" and was able to surround herself with all that she wanted. She looked like a person who enjoyed leisured ease, and the freedom from petty cares which

wealth brings, and which is really one of its chief attractions.

And Lady Fitzcarrick, who was a person only capable of entering into any trouble she had herself experienced, had thus judged Lady Nuthurst. She was rich; she had no carking cares; and therefore Lady Fitzcarrick felt she must indeed be a happy woman and much to be envied. She was not, like herself, torn with anxiety as to how to make two ends meet, nor worried to death to see her daughters deprived of all their pleasures at an age when they most wanted to enjoy them.

*“Each thinks his own the bitterest trial given,
His neighbour’s suff’rings presently forgot.”*

Blanche, more observant, or else from her artistic faculty more prone to notice and read the human countenance, fancied the old lady had rather a worn look upon her face; an expression half sad, half wistful. But, beyond that, she was struck with the impression that Lady Nuthurst’s face was familiar to her. She felt as if she had seen her before.

All the time that the two elder ladies were

talking together, she became more and more convinced of this. It puzzled her; for she knew she could not have done so, since she had never even heard her name till this morning; and yet the impression remained.

Having chatted a little while about weather, health, nerves and sleeplessness, Lady Fitzcarrick rose to go.

"I must be returning to my work, Lady Nuthurst," she said. "I know I shall be very poor company till I have completed it. But I leave you a good substitute, in the shape of something younger and less preoccupied."

And so saying, she went back to her room, and was soon deep in the weary household books, servants' wages, girls allowances, etc.

There seemed to be even less for "Sundries" than there had been in the morning.

She thought she must have made a mistake somewhere, and she patiently prepared to begin all over again.

CHAPTER XIII.

LADY FITZCARRICK had dismissed Blanche in the way older people do anyone under five and twenty. The very young are never supposed to have any cares or preoccupations.

And Blanche, meanwhile, had her mind and thoughts so full that when Lady Fitzcarrick was gone, she could not for a few minutes think of anything to say. She was quite glad to remember what Lady Fitzcarrick had said as to Lady Nuthurst being easy to talk to, as she would find congenial subjects herself, and only require a good listener.

The old lady, however, did not at once embark upon her own concerns. She began talking about the Fitzcarricks, and saying how sorry she felt for the poor mother, her husband pulling one way and her children another. But it was evident that she was quite on Sir Dermot's side, and thought the girls very selfish and inconsiderate.

"Dear Lady Fitzcarrick," she said with a smile, "is one of those people who thinks all her own belongings perfect, and all her geese swans! She talks to me of nothing but her daughters and their perfections. I myself, meanwhile, have not such a very high opinion of them. But all the girls of the day are the same now. Everyone tells me they are so inconsiderate, so independent and selfish, so out of sympathy with their parents and elders. That little Kathleen—(what a pretty creature she is, by the way!)—is what *I* call very disrespectful to her father. Don't you think so?"

But Blanche felt she owed Kathleen Fitzcarrick far too large a debt of gratitude just now to disparage her in any way; and so, to avoid giving a direct answer, she asked Lady Nuthurst if she had any daughters herself. And now she found she had indeed turned on the tap.

"No, no daughters; only sons. Just my two boys, that is all. Dear, thoughtful, loving sons they are! They have always been very good to me, and we have been very happy together; so I have never felt the want of daughters.

"My eldest married early, and so to a certain

extent I have lost *him*. You do, as a rule, lose your son when you give him up to another woman, you know—

‘My son’s my son till he gets him a wife.’

That is quite true. But I have my younger son all to myself still. And for some years we have made our home together. More or less, that is; as far as it has been possible to do so. For he is in the Diplomacy, and so, of course, has been appointed a good deal to out-of-the-way places and climates where I could not well follow him. But latterly he has had some of the plums of the profession, and been *attaché* first in Paris, and last year in Vienna.”

And then, as Lady Fitzcarrick had warned Blanche, Lady Nuthurst embarked on a glowing description of the perfections of her son. He was, according to her account, the most attractive of human beings. His nature was so sunny; his disposition so full of charm. He had been a lovable child, a lovable boy; and was now the most lovable of men. Any mother might be excused for being proud of such a son. And he was *so* handsome! . . .

She stopped suddenly and sighed.

Some recollection seemed to have come over her; and she looked so sad that Blanche felt quite sorry for her. Her face assumed a troubled expression, and she did not seem to be going to resume what she had been saying.

A silence ensued, and Blanche, in order to renew the conversation, enquired after a moment or two if Lady Nuthurst was feeling better for her stay in Switzerland. Lady Fitzcarrick had told her she was there for her health.

Lady Nuthurst replied in the affirmative, but rather doubtfully. And then she relapsed into silence.

“Was it rheumatism?” Blanche enquired, knowing that the place where they were was celebrated for its uses in that complaint, and wanting to make Lady Nuthurst talk again.

“No,” she answered, “not rheumatism.” Another pause, and then she said, “I have had a great shock, Miss Talbot, from which I have never really recovered. I have been quite shattered ever since! and though, thank God, everything has ended better than it might have done, it has made an old woman of me before my time. . . . But I won’t bother you with my troubles.”

"Oh, do tell me about it," said Blanche, "that is, if it is not painful to you to talk about it."

Lady Nuthurst still hesitated for a moment, and then, bit by bit, her trouble came out.

It was on this dear second son that a cruel blow had fallen. A terrible accident which befell him during an expedition into the Austrian Highlands last year (he was *attaché* in Vienna at the time) had destroyed his health and his future prospects at one fell swoop and spoilt his life for ever. "My dear Miss Talbot!" exclaimed the old lady, interrupting herself, "how flushed you are! Do you find the room too hot?"

"Oh no," said Blanche hastily; "please go on."

"For weeks," resumed Lady Nuthurst, "he lay between life and death; and the long strain of uncertainty was to me almost as hard to bear as the first shock. What I went through between hopes and fears all those weeks, sitting hour by hour in his dark room, waiting to see what was to be, I can never tell you! For, if the sentence of death should be remitted, there was one threatened in its stead of hopeless paralysis—a

living death, that was all the difference! When I thought of him paralysed and helpless, my rebellious heart cried, 'Let him die!' Then, when I thought of him dead and gone, and the emptiness of my world without him, I said, 'Anything but that!' Well! after a time the sentence was commuted to a probable weakness of all one side. His hand and arm would be useless, he would drag one leg all his life, and the injury to the nerves of the spine would affect his eyesight. Thank God! all that was mitigated in the end, and he recovered—partially that is, but never to be really the same again! He lay for months on his back, and all that time I used to wonder whether he really took in the full meaning of the sentence, mitigated though it was; and how he would bear it when day by day, and month by month, its meaning was borne in upon him. He was *such* a manly fellow, and he would have to live such an unmanly life! I always had in my head, haunting me, those lines of Mrs. Norton's in the 'Lady of La garaye':—

'Crooked and sick for ever he must be,
His life of wild activity and glee
Was with the Past!'

And almost more haunting still:—

‘Can that be his, that querulous tone that tells
Its little ills, and on each ailment dwells?’

I dreaded the effect upon him. I shrank from the thought that it might affect his character; that he might become soured and embittered; that he might recover to be no longer the son in whose disposition I had always so gloried, whose sunshiny nature had been my delight. But I misjudged him. Even *I* had not fathomed the depth of his grand character. You see, my dear, in noble natures circumstances develop character; ignoble ones are mastered by them—go under, as it were.’

Lady Nuthurst paused and looked at Blanche, as if waiting for some comment on what she had said. But none came.

“Great natures,” she resumed, “override their circumstances.

“And I think it will show you a little what my son must be, when I tell you that from that bed he rose, unsoured, unembittered, bright and sunshiny as ever; and took up his changed and marred life bravely, with never a murmur, never

a lament, and without a trace of gloom or rebellion. I know many people are what is called 'resigned'; but then they let you *know* they are resigned, if you understand what I mean! But my Launcelot always makes me think of the verse: 'God loveth a *cheerful* giver.' And I cannot say how I admire, how I reverence him for the way he has worked out that verse in his life. It touches me so that I can hardly ever trust myself to speak of it. . . ." And the mother's voice faltered for a minute. "He sets me a noble example," she went on presently, "which I am afraid I do not always follow! I am by no means such a resigned person as he is; and *I* did not give up cheerfully for him, as he did for himself. I rebelled fiercely in my heart, and I do still, at seeing his career spoilt, and he cut off from so much, debarred from so much. Yet I know I ought to be very thankful that everything has turned out so far better than I at one time dared to hope. It would be wicked and ungrateful of me not to be deeply thankful, and I *am*. Yes—I am sure I am. But still! . . . I was so proud of him! . . . It pains me so to

see him so different to what he used to be. Even little things in those we love, it is such pain to find gone or altered. Do you know," she went on after a pause, "what it is to know and love a footprint, and how characteristic one gets to feel it to be?"

A low murmur from Blanche, which Lady Nuthurst took to be assent.

"There is, I think, so much character in a step; and his was so firm, so full of life and energy. I knew it at any distance, and I used to love to listen for it, and to hear it getting nearer. . . ." She broke off, and added sadly: "I hardly know it now! . . . I find myself saying when I hear it coming:

"Can that be his, that halt uneven tread? . . ."

"He laughs himself, and says it is a judgment on him, because he always had such a dislike to a limp in other people."

Lady Nuthurst looked up smiling, but Blanche's head was bent down.

"What was the accident?" she asked, in a low voice.

"Did I not tell you? I thought I had. It

was an accident he met with in the Austrian Highlands on a shooting expedition last autumn. The shot was carelessly fired by one of the party, and my poor boy received some part of the discharge in the upper part of his back and neck. . . . My dear Miss Talbot! what is the matter? You have turned quite pale!"

"Oh! it is nothing, nothing," murmured Blanche "*please, please* go on."

"You have a kind, sympathetic nature, my dear," said the old lady warmly, "and I am afraid my sad story has been a little too much for you. One ought not to tell young people one's troubles. It was selfish and thoughtless of me; but your face led me on. I shall stop now. There is, anyhow, nothing more to tell; except that—just to show you what Launcelot is—I must add that from that day to this, no one has ever known which of the party fired the shot. He not only would never reveal the name himself, but laid all the others under a solemn oath that they would never do so; the perpetrator himself included."

She looked at Blanche for sympathetic admiration, but again failed to meet her glance.

"And yet, do you know," she proceeded, "I have a feeling I should know him directly, if ever I were so unfortunate as to meet him! I feel as if he must be branded with a mark like Cain! I don't know what you will say, my dear, and I am afraid you will think me a very wicked old woman, when I tell you I don't feel as if I ever could forgive that man!"

"But it was an accident," faltered Blanche; and there was an unconscious accent of pleading in her voice.

"Of course it was! You don't suppose I think it was done on purpose! I know it was an accident; but I always feel he must have been a careless, heedless, impetuous young fellow, not fit to be trusted with a gun; and I cannot forgive him for that. . . . I never can talk like this to my son, you know. It shocks him so. But I am not so good as Launcelot. He gets his disposition from his father, not from *me*. I am only saying it to you as an indifferent person, who has no interest in any of the people concerned. And of course I bear the man no malice. I even wish him well; for I believe, so my son tells me, that he feels it

deeply, and has never been the same since. But I never wish to see him—never wish to hear his name. I would go a hundred miles out of his way if ever I thought I was likely to meet him. I could not trust myself. I do not quite know how I should behave. *How* could I stand the sight of the man who spoilt my dear boy's life, shattered his health, and marred all his future . . . ? You look dreadfully white, dear Miss Talbot? I am a selfish, garrulous old woman, and have tired you talking so long after your fatiguing journey. *Do* go up to your room, and rest."

"I think I will," said Blanche, in rather a low voice; and she got up and walked a little unsteadily to the door, and up the stairs to her own room.

There was a glorious sunset a little while after. It lighted up the peaks of the distant mountains, turning their snow-clad summits into pink and pale gold.

It shone also through the various windows of the hotel, revealing in one the bent back of poor Lady Fitzcarrick, as she toiled over her

scheme of expenses; in another, the upturned face of old Lady Nuthurst, her eyes still dim with the tears her lately-told tale had called forth;—and in a third, the prone figure of a girl on the bed, where she had flung herself; her face hidden, and her slight form shaken from head to foot with convulsive sobs; overcome at last by the prolonged strain of that gradual revelation!

CHAPTER XIV.

THE same sunset found two ardent admirers far away up in the mountains.

Rupert Talbot and Kathleen Fitzcarrick had been together nearly all day. They had kept ahead of the others most of the time; and a long, pleasant day in the company of the bright girl had evidently had a very good effect on Rupert's spirits.

They had hurried on to catch the view of the sunset from the best spot; and their up-turned faces, glowing with excitement, admiration, the effect of the invigorating air, and the healthy exercise of mountain climbing, were very beaming—bright, moreover, not only with the reflected rays of the sun, but with enjoyment in each other's society.

“Oh, how beautiful! how very beautiful!” exclaimed the girl, as she gazed on the magnificent spectacle before her.

The rest of the party now came up, the sunset slowly faded away; and they all repaired to the little hotel where they were to spend the night, and separated to get ready for dinner.

Directly he was alone Rupert's face changed, and took on its usual melancholy air. His mind reverted to his conversation with his sister, and the recollection of it brought on the gloomy train of thoughts habitual to him.

They were, however, broken short by the sound of the dinner-bell, and, glad to escape from them, he went downstairs.

"You cannot think what a delightful chambermaid there is here," said Kathleen, as they all sat down to dinner at a little "*table-apart*."

"That is nothing new," said Sir Dermot; "all the hotels we have been at are full of these delightful chambermaids, according to Kathleen. I confess I don't find them delightful at all. Their only object is to get one's money out of one. Simply sharks, the whole lot of them,—waiters, chambermaids, and all."

"Oh, no! Papa, don't say that!" exclaimed Kathleen. "They are so obliging, and you can't think what a hard life they lead, up so early, and in bed so late; and their wages are so low! I do hope, Captain Talbot," she added, turning to Rupert, "that you tip highly; for from what she tells me, travellers' tips form the chief part of their wages, poor things!"

"Don't you do anything of the sort, Talbot," said Sir Dermot; "that is just the way you young fellows spoil the market. All I can say is that 'attendance' or 'service,' as they call it, is heavily charged for on the hotel bill. Why should we pay twice over?"

Kathleen took no notice of this interruption. She went on speaking eagerly to Rupert.

"And oh, Captain Talbot, if you had any old clothes to spare, you have no idea how useful they would be. You see, these chambermaids are most of them peasants' wives, who come in from their homes during the tourist season, and live all the winter on what they have earned; and they are so glad of men's clothes for their husbands and sons. This one,

‘Old Jeanette,’ as they call her, has two boys, nearly grown up.”

“How in the world she gets all this information out of people, I cannot imagine,” said Sir Dermot, turning to Rupert in astonishment.

“Old Jeanette has been telling me all about the arrangements here,” continued Kathleen, “and it appears to me the poor things are half starved. It seems there are three tables in the hotel: the visitors’ table, the visitors servants’ table (at which the landlord and his family also eat), and then, last of all, the table of the hotel servants. And, poor things! by the time the food reaches them, you have no idea, she tells me, what it is like. It consists of what has been left at the other tables, all served up in a heap. And she calls it an *amasement!* Isn’t that a capital name? I must really introduce her to you. She is a most delightful person.”

“But does she talk English?” asked Rupert.

“Oh, yes,” answered Kathleen; “she prides herself upon her English, and not only upon that, but upon understanding all about English

people. She says she has had so much to do with them. She was telling me a story just now, before I came down, about a naval officer she knew here some years ago, ending up with 'he was a captain then, but his elder brother is dead since; and so now he is an admiral, of course!'"

While they were all chatting gaily like this, poor Blanche had been going through such an experience of "Sturm und Drang," as had never come near her in all her young life before.

"Oh, Rupert! Rupert!" she sobbed, as she lay.

And as, over and over again, her mind revolved her own position, she became more bewildered, and more utterly miserable. She could see no way out of the meshes of the web in which she found herself entangled. But only one thing seemed clear to her. Rupert must not stay here. He and Lady Nuthurst must not meet.

The old lady's words were burnt into her brain: "I would go a hundred miles out of

his way if ever I thought I was likely to meet him."

It was surely incumbent on her, Blanche, as the only person who knew everything, to protect the mother from this meeting, to do her best to save her from it. And though Lady Nuthurst was unconscious of Rupert's identity, and could therefore meet him in a blissful state of ignorance, Rupert could not do the same by her. He, at anyrate, must know, must always have known, who Launcelot Sackville's mother was. And in her present overwrought and excited frame of mind, what the old lady had said returned upon Blanche's memory with such force as almost to make her believe there was some truth in it. "Do you know, I have a feeling I should know him directly, if ever I should be so unfortunate as to meet him. I feel he must be branded with a mark like Cain."

The very thought of Lady Nuthurst's recognising Rupert made Blanche's heart beat with nervous dread. She felt she could not face the position. The whole thing would be impossible, unbearable. She felt quite confused

as she thought of it, and passed her hand over her head once or twice in a helpless way, as she tried to remember who knew what, and which knew who!

As she endeavoured to realise it, she became afraid that she herself might make some fatal mistake when the moment came, slip out the wrong thing to the wrong person, and perhaps bring about the very crisis she wished to avoid.

No! she could not undertake it. She could not face it herself, far less help others through such a maze of complications. It would entail an amount of acting on her part, let alone its difficulty, for which she felt quite unequal. She must persuade Rupert to leave at once; to-morrow, or next day, if possible. She must get him away as quickly as she could. And now perhaps, having found friends, he would be unwilling to do so!

She must try and steady her head, and think out how best she could manage to persuade him to come away, without assigning any particular reason.

How she got through the *table d'hôte* dinner that evening she hardly knew. Indeed it was

only that she was afraid that Lady Fitzcarrick would come to her room to see what was the matter if she did not go down, that she had made the effort to do so; that she had risen from the bed where she had flung herself, bathed her aching head and her smarting eyelids; and controlling herself by a violent effort of determination, had descended to the *salle*, feeling as if she had lived years since yesterday.

Was it only yesterday that she had left F——? only yesterday that she had parted with Lady Mary at the Junction? only this morning that Rupert had come into her room and discovered the portrait on the table? It all seemed years and years ago.

She tried to listen and respond to Lady Fitzcarrick's talk at dinner, but it was with the greatest difficulty that she could disengage her thoughts from all that was going on in her mind.

But in spite of everything, she found, to her own surprise, when she was safe in her own bedroom again, that her most prominent feeling

was an earnest desire to find herself in Lady Nuthurst's company again!

It was such a joy to her, this near vicinity of Monsieur's mother. She was lost in astonishment to think how, without any planning, any volition of her own, she should thus have been thrown into her society—the best channel for hearing of him, his whereabouts, his past, his present, actual circumstances.

And Lady Fitzcarrick, meanwhile, was suffering from compunction when she noticed how abstracted and depressed Blanche was at dinner, and how far from well she looked. She made up her mind that the girl was dull, and that it had been selfish of her to leave her so much alone, and then to inflict old Lady Nuthurst upon her. She heroically determined that she would devote herself to Blanche's amusement the whole of the next day till her brother came back, and would put away her calculations for her sake.

Accordingly, when Blanche came down to breakfast next morning, she found Lady Fitzcarrick full of apologies for having neglected her so the day before. She assured her that it

should not happen again; they would go here, and they would go there together to-day, and she would show her all that there was to be seen. She would even, for her sake, go a little way up one of the most accessible of the mountains on a mule! But, above all, she would not "inflict old Lady Nuthurst" on her again. She would look after her herself this afternoon, when she and Blanche returned from their expedition.

Little did Lady Fitzcarrick guess as, in her sympathy with girls and their amusements, she toiled and slaved all day to give Blanche pleasure, that the girl was longing for the expedition to come to an end, and to return to the hotel in the hope of catching sight of Lady Nuthurst, by hook or by crook, to be admitted to her room. For the time was going by so fast, the chances of meeting lessening every moment; Rupert would be upon her this evening!

They got home early in the afternoon, and Lady Fitzcarrick, still full of the heroism of self-sacrifice, announced that she would now go and sit with the "old lady."

"And, meanwhile, you can go on with the sketch you began of the mountains," she added.

Blanche was bitterly disappointed; but it was no use saying anything, no use making any offers. Lady Fitzcarrick was firm. Blanche went up to her room with a heavy heart, but she had not been there long before Lady Fitzcarrick knocked at her door.

“Lady Nuthurst wants to see you, Miss Talbot, for a minute. She says she has something to say to you; otherwise I would have tried to get you off.”

Blanche jumped up eagerly, and in another moment was tapping at the sitting-room door; her heart beating rather quickly.

The old lady was sitting in the low chair by the window just as Blanche had left her the evening before.

“Come here, my dear, she said,” holding out her hand as Blanche entered. “I want to tell you how sorry I am I distressed you so last night, and to apologise to you for talking about melancholy things to a young girl like you. But I promise you I will never do it again if you are kind enough to come and sit with me again. But you should not look so sympathetic! Your face drew me on. You are not like the girls of

the day, I see; not a *fin-de-siècle* young lady at all. You can sympathise with your elders, and do not think them bores. But that is no reason why I should take advantage of you, and I won't again. You feel too much, my dear child, if you will allow me to call you so. But what I specially wanted to say to you was that I did not really mean quite all I said about that unfortunate young man who was the cause of all our troubles. *That*, I saw by your face, was what distressed you more than anything. You turned quite white. I suspect you are like my son, and do not think it is right to talk like that. *He* never can bear to hear me say such things! He says he cannot understand anyone being so unforgiving. Now I am sure that was it, and you thought me very wicked! Now confess you did. Sit down, dear, and tell me you are not too much shocked with me to stay with me a little while."

Blanche took a seat, and tried to reassure the old lady, feeling the most awful hypocrite as she did so.

"Now listen," said Lady Nuthurst. "I bear the young fellow no malice or ill-will, I assure

you. And I wish him well. Yes—I am *sure* I wish him well. Only I never wish to hear of him, or to see him, that is all. And the world is surely wide enough for us both! Probably he would take good care to keep out of my way. Don't you think so?"

Blanche said something inaudible.

Presently Lady Nuthurst laughed quietly to herself. "When I say this sort of thing to my son," she said, "he always tells me I am like an old woman who lives in our village at home, who once when talking about the unforgiving disposition of one of her neighbours, said, 'I'm not like that myself. *I forgive—but I'm never the same to the person afterwards!*' He must have his joke, must Launcelot, whatever happens. *How* he used to make us all laugh when he was lying on his back all those months! Now here I am getting on the old subject again, and I have made up my mind not to mention anything sad to you any more. How stupid I am! Lady Fitzcarrick tells me you have been sketching to-day on the mountains, and have done some very pretty things. Will you let me see them?"

"Oh, certainly!" said Blanche. "I will go

and fetch them. They are only roughly sketched in, you know, but you shall see them as far as they have gone."

And she went away, returning in a few minutes with her drawings in her hand.

Lady Nuthurst expressed great approval of them. "You have really a great deal of talent," she said.

Something in her voice reminded Blanche of another voice which had said the same thing in a different language. The walls of the little sitting-room at F—— rose around her, and "*Made-moiselle a vraiment beaucoup de talent*" seemed to sound in her ears again.

"I really like doing heads best," she said, "and portraits best of all. Will you let me do yours?" she added, struck with a sudden idea, which would form an excuse for being with the old lady.

Lady Nuthurst laughed. "Certainly, if you wish it. But I am under no delusions about my personal appearance; and I know I am a plain old woman, as I was a plain young one. But if you are good at a likeness, I should like you to do me for my son."

"I can generally catch a likeness," said Blanche, "and I am pretty quick about my sketches. I mean I should not have to bother you with long sittings."

"Oh, I have nothing to do but to sit still," said Lady Nuthurst. "It will be no bother to me, and I shall be glad of your society. Only I wish I was a better subject. Ah! if only Launce-
lot were here, and you could do *him*! Stay! you are an artist, and I should like to show you his miniature as a child."

She opened a case which lay on the table at her side, and handed Blanche the miniature of a beautiful little boy of about four years old. She felt almost as if she would have known it, even if she had not been told who it was. Child as he then was, it was very like him still. The open countenance was there, the frank expression, the laugh in the eyes.

"Isn't he a darling?" said the mother; and she took it out of Blanche's hand and gazed at it lovingly herself. "Now get me that other case off the writing-table," she added, "and I will show you another I had done of him some

years ago; before his accident, you know." She sighed.

Blanche obeyed; her hand shook a little as she opened the case, and saw the face she knew so well. She could not, try as she would, think of anything to say, any remark to make, and felt horribly double-faced and awkward.

However, it did not matter. Lady Nuthurst was quite satisfied with the earnest way she was gazing at the miniature. "I thought you would be struck with it," she said, with a gratified smile. "Does it not seem a shame," she went on with another sigh, "that he should have to hide his beautiful eyes under coloured glasses?"

"Really?" stammered Blanche.

"Yes, alas! But it is only for a time, I hope. Meantime people who meet him casually have no idea he is so good-looking, and that hurts my maternal vanity dreadfully."

"Does it?" murmured Blanche again.

"But I am quite in spirits about his eyes now. He has been to the great oculist at Wiesbaden, and he sent him to F—— to drink the

waters. He is no doubt better. The eyes are sensitive still, and he cannot bear a strong light, but we hope that will improve. And then he will no longer have to wear glasses."

Another ejaculatory murmur from Blanche, who was feeling more and more every moment the absolute necessity of trying to find an opportunity of telling Lady Nuthurst that she had met her son at F——

She felt such a terrible hypocrite in not doing so. Yet, how was she to do it? How difficult now it would be to explain away her silence hitherto; and it would, she felt sure, get more difficult the longer she delayed it. Well! she would begin her drawing, and then see if any way would occur to her of introducing the subject with some degree of ease.

She suggested a position to Lady Nuthurst, and fixed her in it.

"You allow your sitter to talk, I hope?" said the old lady.

"Oh yes, certainly," replied Blanche.

And talk Lady Nuthurst did; at first only on general subjects; but soon, by an easy transition, she slid back to her favourite topic.

Blanche felt very perturbed; and began thinking all over the different ways of broaching her information. But nothing seemed quite to do. It was by no means easy; and besides, Lady Nuthurst did not give her much chance, as her flow of conversation went steadily on.

But at last she drew breath for a moment, and Blanche thought her opportunity had come. She was just framing a sentence in her head, and in another moment would have given voice to it, when all her thoughts were sent flying by Lady Nuthurst's next remark.

"Such a tiresome thing happened at this place, F——" she said; "it annoyed me very much."

She paused, as if she expected Blanche to hazard a guess; and Blanche, who was wondering what new revelation might be in store, began to get nervous.

"What was that?" she said.

"Well! I must tell you, by way of preamble, that though he is not the least vain or self-conscious, my son *is* sensitive about his appearance since his accident. He is inclined to exaggerate what he calls his infirmities. 'I must

take a back seat now, mother,' he used to say as he was recovering, 'for the rest of my life.' I have done all I could to counteract this feeling in him, but not, I fear, with much success. So you may imagine my annoyance when I got a letter from him one day from F—— telling me he had had a quite independent and candid outside opinion expressed upon his appearance, which had brought home to him more than ever the truth I had tried to gloss over. Now, what do you think had happened?"

Blanche, in anticipation of what she was going to hear, was getting redder and redder, and wondering how she was to meet and parry the thrust she knew was coming.

"Can you imagine anything so unlucky as his overhearing a lady talking to her friend about him in the dark, one evening out of doors, when she did not know he was by?"

Blanche's head was bent closely over her block, which apparently engrossed all her attention, for she made no answer.

"And then he told me what this tiresome woman said. It was utterly foolish, of course, as well as very ill-natured, and I think she must

indeed have been most *mauvaise langue*. But, all the same, he chose to accept her opinion as final. 'Truth will out, you see,' he wrote. Now, was not that an unfortunate thing to happen?"

Obliged to answer this time, Blanche made some incoherent remark. She longed to get up and run away, to relieve the tension of her feelings. But, that being impossible, she bent her head closer than ever over her drawing, and continued to sketch very rapidly, inwardly wondering to herself with some bitterness whether, since the world began, any poor human being had ever before been so punished, and made to suffer in so many different ways, for a few hasty and careless observations.

But Lady Nuthurst's thoughts were now entirely changed by the entrance of a manservant bearing some letters on a tray.

"Ah! here comes the post! One from my daughter-in-law, one from the banker. Ah! here it is! One from Launcelot! Now we shall hear when he is coming!"

Blanche gave such a start that her pencil

dropped from her hand. Her fingers shook, and down it went on the floor.

This she did not regret, as it gave her an excuse for going down on her knees after it, and thus hiding the agitation of her countenance.

When she had recovered the pencil, and had sat down again to her easel, Lady Nuthurst was deep in her letter; and Blanche found herself exposed to that form of slow torture and tantalisation, no doubt known to the reader, of having isolated scraps of a letter in which one is vitally interested read aloud at little intervals.

“. . . . ‘No : . . . more to do than I expected will come as soon as ever I can cannot fix a day’ Well! I *am* disappointed,” said Lady Nuthurst, as she folded up the letter and put it down on the table.

“Were you expecting your son here?” said Blanche, in as quiet a tone as she could command.

“Expecting him here? Of course I am! It was only this tiresome agent’s business that hurried

him off to Ireland the very morning after he came."

"Came!" said Blanche, startled out of all calm and precaution this time. "Has he been here lately?"

"Lately! my dear! Why, he only left me the day before yesterday. He arrived here from F—— the day before that. And this tiresome telegram came the very next morning, and he had to hurry off to Ireland at a moment's notice. And now," she added, "I don't suppose he will be here for another three days or more. Shall you still be here then? I should like you to do his picture for me so much."

"I am afraid I shall be gone by then," answered Blanche; and her voice was unlike itself, for her breath came thick and fast.

The dressing-gong, pealing through the hotel, now mercifully gave her the excuse she needed so sorely for getting out of the room.

Her maid was standing in the passage outside, and gave her a letter from Rupert, which she said had just been brought by a messenger.

Blanche took it mechanically and hurried on

to her own chamber. She sank into the chair by the window, and putting the letter down, gave herself up to the rush of thoughts which the news she had just heard from Lady Nuthurst brought surging into her mind.

He had been here! He had been under this very roof!

He must have left the very day before she arrived.

They must have passed each other in their respective trains on the road.

And now he was coming! He would be here, and she would be far away.

He was coming, and *she* must go!

CHAPTER XV.

THE party in the mountains had all this time been enjoying themselves immensely.

The sunrise in the morning had far surpassed, to their thinking, the sunset of the evening before, and the people at the hotel had told them there were still further heights where sunsets and sunrises were seen to even better advantage.

The two girls were wild to go on, and to spend more time in these enchanted regions. They appealed to their father; and Sir Dermot was soon over-persuaded, and acceded to their request for making a longer stay.

Forgetful of economy, and of his poor wife toiling below at her accounts, he was soon engaging more guides, and throwing himself heart and soul into the arrangements for another and longer expedition on the morrow, easily persuading himself that it would, after all, be quite as

cheap in the end as returning to-day, and then perhaps making a fresh start a few days later on.

"You will remain with us, Talbot, I hope," he said, when the arrangements were complete.

He had not had a man to speak to for some time; for his foreign languages being *nil*, he could not consort with foreigners, and he clung to the young Englishman's society; for, since his father had become an invalid, Rupert had had a good deal to do with the management of the estate, and could talk on the subjects nearest Sir Dermot's heart. He was ready at any moment to discuss rents, labourers' wages, tenants' improvements, etc., etc.

But he now demurred. "I think I must go back to my sister, Sir Dermot," he said.

"Oh, do stay!" pleaded Kathleen. "Your sister will be quite happy with Mamma, who will probably do a great deal more to amuse her than you would. And," she added in a lower tone only meant for his ears, "Papa will relapse into gloom again, if we are '*en famille*,' and we shall hear of nothing but economy, retrenchment, and all the rest of it."

"Is the only reason you wish me to stay to act as buffer, Miss Kathleen?" said Rupert, in the same tone.

"Oh no," said the girl, laughing, but blushing a little, "of course not. Eily and I both want you to stay. And for poor Mamma's sake too. It will be such a charity to give her a longer rest from Papa: and perhaps he won't stay unless you do. So, for all our sakes, stay! Well! for *my* sake then, if you will! Only stay!"

Rupert found it difficult to resist the pleading look in the grey eyes which looked shyly up to his. Still! poor little Blanchie! And they had not parted happily either. He felt too, looking back, he had perhaps been a little hard on her. Remorse set in, and it was some time before he could make up his mind whether he ought to accept Sir Dermot's invitation or not.

But the end of it was he stayed! And letters were written that evening both to Blanche and to Lady Fitzcarrick explaining that the party were likely to be delayed some time longer than they had intended: perhaps even two or three days.

Sir Dermot wrote diplomatically to his wife, giving his views as to the probable economy of the scheme, and adding he knew she was anxious the girls should be amused during their stay abroad and see as much as possible.

Rupert's letter to Blanche was a very affectionate one. It was full of excuses at his seeming neglect of her, and he made a little allusion to their conversation of that morning which was suggestive of compunction. He begged her to forget it, and to forgive him if he had seemed a little hard upon her. He could not, he said, explain himself. There were reasons why he could not do so. But he felt quite sure that if he could, she, Blanche, would be the first to enter into his feelings, and to forgive him for any little impatience or injustice he had shown.

As he closed and directed his letter, he had a very remorseful feeling towards his sister. "Poor little Blanchie!" he said to himself. "It has all been rather rough on her."

"Oh! Captain Talbot! What *is* the matter?" said a gay voice; "you look as grave and careworn as Papa!"

Rupert's brow cleared at once, and he made some laughing rejoinder.

This was the letter that was put into Blanche's hand as she left Lady Nuthurst's room, and which, absorbed in her own thoughts, she did not take the trouble to open for some time. It was only, she supposed, to say what time he would arrive that evening.

But at last she took it up, and opened it. Her face changed and flushed with delight as she read it, and took in its contents. How little Rupert guessed what a relief that letter of his would be to his sister; what a joy it would be to her to hear that his return was delayed. What did it not mean to her?

Her heart gave a great bound as she thought for a moment of the possibilities which now lay in the future! But she would not let herself dwell on them. No! Such dreams were too fair to be realised, too good to be true. Rupert would be back long before. And when Rupert came back, she must go.

But, at anyrate, an immediate escape from her difficulties was afforded her by this delay. She could put the thought of them away for two,

or even three days, and give herself up to the enjoyment of the present, without thinking of the future.

For the present *was* enjoyment, anyhow. To be in the company of his mother, where at any moment, she might hear his name, at any moment, a letter might arrive from him—to have light thrown on his history and character by the person who in all the world knew him best, and loved him dearest;—all this to Blanche was the purest pleasure. It was all she asked of life at this moment.

Her sketch, which she would now have time to finish highly, would furnish her with the excuse she wanted for being with Lady Nuthurst as much as she liked; and in the thought of this, Blanche was perfectly content.

She felt happier than she had done for long as she put down Rupert's letter. And she was touched to the quick by the note of affectionate remorse in it. In view of her recent enlightenment, how she felt for him; how her heart ached for him! Poor Rupert! Poor, dear fellow! How well she understood now what his feelings must have been when his eye fell upon the portrait;

first, his surprise and bewilderment, and then his indignation as he realised the identity of Launce-lot Sackville under a different name, and remembered all she had said about him.

She recalled Rupert's outburst of feeling; his words of almost exaggerated praise, his strange unwonted emotion. How clear it all was to her now!

Blanche explained to Lady Fitzcarrick, when she met her at dinner, that she was doing a portrait of Lady Nuthurst, and would, therefore, be well employed all the next morning.

For she was terribly afraid all her plans might be spoilt by that lady's well-meant but mistaken kindness; and that now that the party were not coming home, she would be forming counter-plans in the shape of another expedition, which would take Blanche away from the hotel for hours together.

However, Lady Fitzcarrick was only too glad to hear her services would not be required. She had been quite as pleased as Blanche to hear the return of the mountain-climbers was postponed; for she was full of another scheme of expenditure

which she had thought out during a sleepless night, and which she wanted to commit to paper without delay.

But she rather annoyed Blanche by expressing amusement at the idea of her painting old Lady Nuthurst; "Such a very plain little old lady!" she exclaimed.

Blanche answered, rather shortly, that she liked painting older people best. There was so much more in their faces. That "in every human face there was either a prophecy or a history, and that *she* preferred the history."

"Oh, very well," said Lady Fitzcarrick, laughing; "there is no accounting for tastes."

And so it came to pass that the next morning Blanche found herself once more at her easel in the little sitting-room, listening to the easy flow of Lady Nuthurst's conversation, and feeling that she would not change places with anyone in the world.

It was indeed to her a labour of love and interest. For it was a picture of *his* mother, and it was going to be given to *him*.

There was no real likeness between the two; but that strange unaccountable thing called

family likeness plays odd tricks sometimes, and there came looks every now and then in the face before her, and little passing expressions, which reminded her of that other face, on which she had been for so long engaged; and, unconsciously, Blanche transferred to her drawing some of the superior merits of that other face; and in so doing, no doubt, considerably flattered her present model.

But as the sitting went on, she got rather troubled. For, so free, so unreserved, was the mother's flow of conversation about her son, that after a time, much as she loved to hear it, Blanche began to have slight qualms as to whether it was fair, or, at anyrate, quite honourable, to listen. She felt almost as if she were gaining information on false pretences.

Lady Nuthurst was imagining her to be a stranger to her son. It was just possible that she would not do it if she knew Blanche was acquainted with him. She felt as if she were acting a part, and lending herself to a certain amount of duplicity, which was very repugnant to her.

But she did not know what to do. She tried several times to turn the conversation; but it was no use. Lady Nuthurst always returned to it. Nothing else seemed to interest her long; and into whatever channel Blanche succeeded in getting it for a little while, her sitter always got back to her starting-point.

She could do nothing, and she could not get up and go. All she could do was not in any way to encourage or help out Lady Nuthurst by comments; and her attention to her work gave her an excuse for not doing so.

“Between you and me,” said Lady Nuthurst, presently, lowering her voice, as if she thought the tables and chairs would hear and repeat what she was going to say, “I have been a *leetle* suspicious of his staying on so long at this watering-place, F——. He was to have joined me here some time ago; and he has been always putting off and putting off, I could not make out why, because he must have finished his course of waters a long while. The only name he mentioned in his letters was a Lady Mary Fitzroy,

whom he seemed to see a great deal of, and to like very much."

A sudden feeling of jealousy shot through Blanche.

"Do you happen to know her?" continued Lady Nuthurst, "or anything about her?"

"Would you like to look at the sketch now?" interrupted Blanche hastily; "it is sketched in, and worked up to a certain extent."

And she handed the block to Lady Nuthurst.

"Oh, you *have* flattered me!" exclaimed the old lady. "I wish I was only half as good looking as that! It is so curious," she added reflectively, as she examined the drawing, "what a look of Launcelot I see in the face. And he is the image of his father; not the least like me. Now I am going to criticise. You have given me too good a nose, too short an upper lip, and the mouth is far too well shaped. It would be much more like me if you just made those alterations."

Blanche did as she was advised, and immediately, almost all likeness to that other face disappeared.

Meantime Lady Nuthurst took up the conversation from the point where Blanche had interrupted her.

"Let me see!" what was I going to say? Oh, about Launcelot and his friends. He is such a popular fellow that he is sure to find or make a friend wherever he goes. The 'hare with many friends,' I always call him."

"Does he keep up with his friends?" asked Blanche, carried away by a sudden impulse to ask the question. "'A hare with many friends' is sometimes a person who likes everybody a little and nobody much; to whom, I mean, one person is as good as another; who makes friends easily, and . . . drops them easily."

"Oh no," said Lady Nuthurst, "that would mean a fickle person, and Launcelot is far too steadfast to be fickle. Neither is he easily pleased. I don't mean that. What a little philosopher you are, my dear!" laughed the old lady, "those were rather profound remarks of yours! No, Launcelot is not like that. He is perhaps rather cosmopolitan. No doubt living abroad has obliged him to be so. He likes all sorts and conditions of men;

and he sees some good in everyone. He does not think it right to what is called 'give yourself airs'; and he always says English people are too exclusive, and cliquish. He himself is always kind and courteous to everyone, high and low, rich and poor, dull or interesting. He likes to make everyone he comes across happy, if he can. People always say he has such charming manners. But *I* say that with Launcelot it is no question of *manners*. It is not courtesy of manners. It is kindness of heart. I wish everybody was more like him." Blanche went on with her drawing, and did not ask any more questions.

The sketch made great way that morning; and in the afternoon, after a walk with Lady Fitzcarrick, Blanche resumed her work, and by the time the light began to fail the picture was nearly finished. She took it upstairs to her room, and, drawing the other portrait from her portfolio, she laid the two side by side, and gazed long and earnestly at them; while she mused how curious it was that by a strange series of events it had been

her lot to paint both mother and son, neither of whom she had even heard of a month ago!

The next day Blanche was obliged to spend more time with Lady Fitzcarrick. They took a long expedition together; and there was, to Blanche's regret, no sitting at all.

On the morning of the third day, however, she settled herself early in Lady Nuthurst's room, to put the last finishing touches to the portrait. Lady Nuthurst was very particular as to all the details, because she said Launcelot would want all those little things to be so very exact. The cap must be carefully painted in; the lace frills at the wrist, etc., etc.

Blanche was working away and Lady Nuthurst was talking, when Blanche suddenly felt something slipping from underneath the drawing paper on which she was engaged. She stopped for a minute, with her wet brush on its way to its destination, to see what it was.

Imagine her dismay when she found it was that other portrait, which, unknowingly, she had brought down with her, hidden behind that

of her present sitter! Blanche's self-control nearly deserted her. She did not know what to do. She managed to check its descent, and to slip it behind the other drawing. But now that one began to slip. She tried in vain to catch at it, and down it went, leaving the portrait she wished to conceal exposed on the easel.

More lifelike than even Blanche had realised, it stood out in the bright light of the window, unmistakable. No one could see it and not recognise it. She cast a terrified glance at Lady Nuthurst, but happily she was looking down at the moment. In another instant, if Blanche were quick, she would have time to pick up the fallen drawing and cover up the other with it.

But Lady Nuthurst, attracted by the rustling of paper and Blanche's hasty movements, suddenly looked up, as if to ask what was the matter.

The next moment she gave a start, and uttered an astonished exclamation.

Blanche saw the start, heard the exclamation, realised what both must mean; and tried

with all her might to keep her wits about her, in order to make up her mind how best to reply to, or to parry, the shower of questions which she knew must follow; feeling herself meanwhile growing giddy and confused; her face first flushing scarlet, and then turning deadly pale.

“Oh! my darling!” she heard the mother say.

Blanche made a violent effort, steadied herself, and looked up.

Lady Nuthurst’s countenance was beaming with delight and excitement; but she was not, as Blanche had imagined, apostrophising the picture; for her head was turned away.

And Blanche, following the direction of the old lady’s eyes, saw Monsieur standing in the doorway.

CHAPTER XVI.

THERE could be no sort of doubt as to which of the three persons present was the most taken aback at the moment.

Monsieur, alias Mr. Brown, alias Launcelot Sackville, started with the most unfeigned surprise and bewilderment at the sight of the little *tableau* before him.

For a moment he stood stock still in his astonishment, his eyes fixed on Blanche.

As for her, she did not dare look at him. She remained bending over her drawing, her eyes resolutely kept down, her heart beating to suffocation, as she wondered what was to happen next. Had she looked at him, she would have seen his first start of surprise controlled by a strong effort; seen him recover his self-possession, and go up to his mother with hands outstretched and a smile of greeting.

“My dearest boy!” exclaimed the old lady,

joyfully, "what a delightful surprise! I did not expect you for another two days or more!"

"I got through my business sooner than I thought I should," came in answer the tones Blanche knew so well; "and so I came off at once."

But both his voice and his mother's sounded to Blanche a long way off. She felt dazed, and as if in a dream. *What* was she to do? How could she meet him as a stranger—pretend not to know him! What would he think of her, if she did? On the other hand, how could she meet him as a friend? What would Lady Nuthurst think of her and of her duplicity in not having told her she knew him, and had been meeting him so recently, if she did?

Only one thing seemed clear to her. She must escape from the room as soon as possible. She was beginning to feel quite faint. She could not face the situation. Flight was her only refuge, her only chance.

Taking advantage of the two being so occupied with each other, she hastily gathered up her drawing-materials, and, first having the presence of mind to snatch up the drawing

off the easel, she slipped softly and unnoticed from the room, and regained her own apartment, her heart palpitating, her cheeks crimson, as she thought of the dangers she had escaped. But now that they were safely over, now that she was by herself again, she found to her dismay that her heart was beating not with fear, but with joy; not with agitation, but with a bounding sense of happiness; with the joy of having been in his presence again, with the hope that they might meet once more!

The very sight of him had brought back with a rush all her most cherished recollections; the memory of all the happy days at F—— the thought of his last words to her at parting; the tones of his voice, the look in his eyes, as he bade her farewell.

What would happen now, she asked herself, her eyes glowing, her heart beating quicker than ever? For assuredly they would meet, and that soon. She would see him next out of his mother's presence; see him, speak to him. What would he do? How would he meet her?

She descended to the *salle*, feeling as if she were treading on air; and as she seated

herself by Lady Fitzcarrick at their little table, she wondered to see her looking just the same, just as weary and careworn as she had done before this wonderful thing had happened; this thing which had changed the whole aspect of the world to Blanche, since she and Lady Fitzcarrick had parted that morning after breakfast.

“Did you finish your sketch?” asked that unconscious lady.

“Not quite,” answered Blanche. “Lady Nuthurst’s son arrived unexpectedly, and so I came away.”

She was thankful to be able to speak naturally, and that she was with a person with whom there was no need for evasion.

“Oh, really,” said Lady Fitzcarrick, “I am glad of that. We shall not have her on our hands quite so much. I suppose he will be coming down to *déjeuner*. We will ask him to join our table.”

Blanche was quite unable to eat. She found herself constantly looking at the door, and starting at every sound. Her heart leapt into her mouth when at last the familiar figure appeared in the doorway.

He came straight up to them, introduced himself to Lady Fitzcarrick, and thanked her warmly for her kindness to his mother.

Then he glanced at Blanche.

"You have met Miss Talbot already, I think," said Lady Fitzcarrick, referring to the meeting upstairs; "so I need not introduce you."

"Yes," he answered, smiling, as he took Blanche's hand in his, and looked penetringly at her for a minute, "we have met before."

And so the meeting passed off quite quietly; and as if it was the most natural thing in the world.

He at once accepted Lady Fitzcarrick's invitation to join them at their table, and soon he was seated between them, talking in the easy, pleasant manner Blanche knew so well.

She was very silent herself, and quite content to be so. It was enough for her to sit there, hearing his conversation, listening to his voice. His very presence gave her a sense of rest and quiet security; and an entire satisfaction with the present moment. The old charm of his personality crept over her; she was under its spell once more.

"I hear from my mother," he said presently to Lady Fitzcarrick, "that the rest of the party are in the mountains, and that you and Miss Talbot are taking care of each other in the meantime. When do you expect the travellers back?"

Blanche's wits were all scattered again by Lady Fitzcarrick's unexpected answer.

"To-day," she said.

In her surprise, Blanche uttered an exclamation of dismay. "*To-day!*" she said.

Lady Fitzcarrick turned to her. "Yes. Did I not tell you? Sir Dermot wrote this morning to say I was to expect them this afternoon."

The trouble in Blanche's face after this was so manifest, her silence and abstraction so marked, that there was no doubt Mr. Sackville noticed it.

He cast concerned glances at her every now and then; but she was now too absorbed in her perplexed and anxious thoughts to be aware of it. Reduced to the last extremity, feeling wholly unequal to the task before her, so complicated now by this sudden arrival, and the prospect of Rupert's unexpected return, she

came to a sudden conclusion. There was only one thing to be done. She must take him into her confidence, and ask his advice. It was the inspiration of a moment; a resolution born of despair; but she acted upon it at once.

"I want," she said to him hurriedly, in an undertone, as they all rose from the table and passed into the hall, "I want very much to speak to you for a few minutes, and to ask your advice about something."

He stopped immediately.

"Certainly," he said; "I am quite at your service."

Lady Fitzcarrick was already half-way up the staircase on her way to give some orders about the travellers' rooms, and did not perceive what was going on.

"Let us come out into the garden," he said; "we shall be quieter there."

As he spoke, he led the way out, and Blanche followed him. Then he turned to her with his old pleasant smile.

"Miss Talbot," he said, "ours is indeed a most unexpected meeting. I was never so astonished in my life as when I found you

sitting with my mother. But why did you cut me dead? I . . .”

He stopped short as his eyes fell upon Blanche's face, and he saw the extreme agitation of her whole demeanour.

“What is it?” he said gently. “Dear Miss Talbot! I am afraid something is troubling you.”

“Oh, I am in such a difficulty!” she exclaimed. “I have drifted into it I hardly know how, and I don't know what to do. You are the only person who can help me, and yet you are the last person I either wish or ought to come to about it. . . .”

She stopped suddenly, alarmed at the admissions she was making.

“Let me help you, if I can,” he said very kindly; “but you must try and make your story clear. You speak in enigmas, and I cannot follow your meaning.”

“I don't know where to begin,” she said despairingly.

“There is no hurry,” he said soothingly. “Give yourself time. Let us walk a little way on.”

So saying, he led the way to a more secluded

part of the garden, and they walked side by side in silence. She remained deep in thought for some moments, trying to frame her ideas. Then suddenly she lifted her eyes to his—her cheeks flushing crimson.

“Mr. Sackville!” she said impetuously, “why did you tell me an untruth about your name?”

“An untruth, Miss Talbot!” he exclaimed. “I told you no untruth.”

“You did,” she said, with some indignation, “you told me your name was Brown.”

“And so it is,” he said.

Blanche made an impatient and somewhat irritated gesture.

“With an ‘e’,” he added, smiling.

“You must explain yourself,” she said with some *hauteur*. “I cannot be trifled with in this way. There is a limit to joking,” she added rather angrily.

“There is no joke about it,” he said. “The explanation is very simple. “My maternal grandfather’s name was Browne (a very good old Irish name, I assure you, I am not at all ashamed of it), and by his will, my mother’s second son—she being an only child—was to

add it to his own patronymic when he succeeded to the Irish estates. My grandfather died this summer. My name, therefore, since July has been Sackville-Browne. Where, my dear Miss Talbot, is the untruth you speak?"

Blanche was silent. The explanation was, as he had said, very simple; the whole thing quite natural. But the consequences of its being unexplained had been so serious to her, that she felt a little sore about it. Still, of course, there was no one to blame.

"If only I had known this before," she said rather bitterly, "I should have been saved a great deal. Things are simple enough when they are explained, but their being unexplained landed me in all sorts of trouble and annoyance."

"Oh, why?" he exclaimed in surprise.

"Because," she said, speaking rapidly, and not giving herself time to think over what she was going to say, "because when I told Rupert that I had met you, and that you had said you knew him, he said he had *never* met you, *never* known you. And then immediately after, when he saw . . . I mean when he realised . . ."

She stopped in extreme confusion. How was she to confess to him that she had surreptitiously painted his picture, and thus revealed to her brother the identity of Launcelot Sackville and of Mr. Browne? It was not to be thought of; it could not be done. She must think of some other way of getting out of her difficulty, and answering his question.

She began again eagerly, nervously, "When I told Rupert I mean when Rupert told me"

She was losing all hold of the ramifications of her story, and getting confused.

In vain she tried to remember what it was she had thought of saying. She had lost her head altogether.

"What I mean is," she said "that I could not *think* why you would not meet him, or why you should not have told me your real name. But now that I understand, now that I see the reason I know all about it now," she ended softly, looking timidly up at him "and. . . ."

She stopped abruptly, alarmed at the exceeding sternness of his face.

He looked altogether unlike himself. In all

their acquaintance she had never seen him look in the least like this.

His lips were firmly compressed; his bright brown eyes flashed for a moment with something which looked like anger.

“Indeed!” he said stiffly; “did your brother enlighten you?”

“Oh! no, no!” she said eagerly, her desire to screen Rupert overcoming for a moment every other consideration; “indeed, *indeed* he did not!”

“Then how,” he continued, with something inexorable in his manner, “how did you get your information?”

Blanche was getting more and more confused and despairing. She could not see her way out of the chaos into which she had drifted; and was every moment becoming more and more entangled in the web she had woven round herself.

Must she—she shrank from the very thought—but *must* she, in order to clear Rupert, sacrifice her own pride and self-respect, and own to this man that she had painted his picture from observation and recollection; thereby, as it seemed

to her, lowering herself in his eyes by betraying the interest she had felt in him?

It seemed so hard, so very hard. It was more, she felt, than could be, than ought to be, demanded of any woman. No, she could not do it. But was it not perhaps due to Rupert that she should? That was the question.

Knowing all she now did, Blanche could see the imputation that would be put upon him by what she had said. He would be supposed to have broken faith. And how could she do away with this idea, except by a full explanation?

For Rupert's sake, Blanche would do much, sacrifice much; for Truth and Justice's sake, even more.

Her mind was made up; and she felt that the sooner it was over, the better.

"Rupert told me *nothing*," she said; "he never betrayed his trust, never broke his word to you. I will tell you exactly how it all came about."

CHAPTER XVII.

THEY had come to a standstill in their walk at the far end of the garden, and had now reached a terrace which commanded a magnificent view.

Blanche felt she could not go on walking any longer.

She twined one arm round a pilaster of the stone colonnade as if for support, before she began her story.

She looked very handsome. Her face was flushed, her eyes were sparkling; her small, well-set head was thrown proudly back; and her slight figure drawn up to its full height.

Nevertheless, her heart was beating fast, and her breath coming quickly.

He glanced at her for a moment, and then looked away over the distant view.

Then she plunged into her recital as a swim-

mer plunges into the cold dark water which he knows he must pass through, if ever he is to reach the shore beyond.

“You know,” she said, speaking rapidly, “that I am fond of doing portraits. . . .”

He just inclined his head; but, as if unwilling to interrupt her, said nothing.

“And I sometimes do them from recollection,” she continued, trying to speak indifferently. “It is—very good practice. When I was at F——,” she went on, desperately, “I did a portrait of *you*.”

He slightly raised his eyebrows.

“It was—very like—and it was this portrait that Rupert saw—and recognised. Then ensued endless confusion between him and me as to your identity under two different names—I insisting that your name was Brown, and that you had told me yourself that it was; he protesting that it was Sackville, and scouting with derision all that I said to the contrary. What *was* I to think, except that, for reasons of your own, you had told me an untruth?”

“That I was an impostor, going about under a feigned name,” he put in quietly.

"No," she said vehemently; "not that, never that! But I felt that there was a mystery somewhere, and that you had not wished me to know what your real name was. I saw that, for some unknown reason, you were unwilling to meet Rupert; that there was a special mystery about your acquaintance with him, and I could not think why—what the reason could be, and—and. . . ."

Blanche's voice and manner changed. An altogether different expression began to steal over her face, and her eyes grew soft and dreamy. All the *hauteur* of her demeanour was gone.

For suddenly there swept over her, with overwhelming force, the thought of the real reason; all that she had heard and learnt of him since, first from her brother's stirring words, then from his mother's vivid portraiture; and the pathos of his history came clearly before her.

She stopped in the middle of what she was saying. Her voice shook, and faltered; the tears came into her eyes. To her dismay she broke down altogether: a sob rose in her

throat; she turned her head away. She had undertaken more than she could carry out, she had miscalculated her own power. She had not foreseen what it would be to talk over with him the subject which moved her so deeply, and which had filled her mind so completely, to the exclusion of every other thought.

Twice she tried to go on, to resume what she was saying; to speak more calmly: but it was no use. She struggled in vain for self-control. The thought of the noble life marred and ruined; the fair prospects destroyed in a moment;—all her own brother's doing; all caused by Rupert's hand, was too much for her; it overcame her completely, and broke her down.

Do what she would; try as hard as she might to force all those thoughts out of her head, and to go on with her recital; the recollection of her own gradual enlightenment through the mother's unconscious revelation *would* come.

Every detail of that record kept chasing itself through her brain—that record so simple, and yet so full of power—the tale of true courage and true manliness, of noble behaviour under a crushing trial, of misfortune borne

so bravely, with such heroic fortitude and patience.

It had seemed almost to dwarf the recital told by Rupert a little while before.

For *his* was a tale of physical strength and courage, as admired by other men; *hers* was the tale of a moral strength and courage even more to be admired, because so much more difficult, and so much more uncommon.

The picture rose before her as a united whole; the character in its dual strength and beauty became one in her eyes, and the hero of the tale was standing beside her!

A passion of feeling, of admiration, of sorrowful regret, of remorseful compunction, all the womanly compassion in which her brother had accused her of being deficient, suddenly swept over her, and completely carried her away.

All barriers of pride, reserve, and self-consciousness were swept away with it; and, forgetting herself altogether, her dignity, everything—she raised her eyes, shining with tears, to his face, and in a low voice, which thrilled

with the emotion she felt, she exclaimed, clasping her hands together—

“Oh! Mr. Sackville! *what* can I say? How can I ever put into words all that I feel about it? *I*, his sister!”

Her eyes were aglow with the deepest feeling; with the many and various thoughts which were surging within her.

Her glance seemed to move him strangely. He was evidently much touched. Some deep feeling stirred within him. He looked away for a moment.

“*Hush!*” he said softly. “You must not say these things to me.”

There was silence after this. He was the first to break it.

“Sit down,” he said gently; “you must be tired of standing so long.”

She obeyed him mechanically, and sank down upon the stone coping, for she was exhausted by the strain of her own feelings. He remained standing by her side.

“We have wandered miles from our point,” he said lightly, with the evident intention of changing the subject; “you have not even begun

to tell me what it is you want me to do for you, nor what the help and advice you want is."

His voice was so calm and quiet as to be almost cold; and Blanche's pride and self-respect came to her aid once more. She was alarmed to think how much feeling she had been betrayed into expressing. She tried to speak indifferently.

"You surely must see how difficult in every way my present position is," she said. "I want you to help me out of it; for I cannot face it alone."

"I will," he said soothingly; "but you must put me '*au fait*' of the circumstances a little more clearly. You have not yet answered my question as to how you got your information. For as you tell me it was not your brother who enlightened you, I cannot imagine who your informant war."

"It was your mother," said Blanche in a low voice. "It was Lady Nuthurst."

"My mother!" he exclaimed. "That is quite impossible. She could not possibly tell you what she does not know herself."

"Ah, but she did it unknowingly, inno-

cently," said Blanche. "I made the deduction myself."

"You *must* be more explicit," he said. "I cannot make it out at all."

"Lady Nuthurst," said Blanche in a still lower tone, and with her head turned away, "only told me the story of . . . of . . . the accident . . . as an incident in the life of one of her sons, whom she imagined, of course, to be a total stranger to me. But it was not difficult for me, coming, as the recital did, close upon my conversation with Rupert, to piece the two stories together, and to come to the truth."

"My mother, when talking to you, imagined me to be a stranger to you?" he put in.

"Yes," said Blanche, "or she would never have told me all she did. That is another of my troubles. She will think me so deceitful and insincere never to have mentioned our acquaintance."

"How was it you never mentioned it?" was the next question.

"How could I?" burst from Blanche. "Of course, at first I did not realise who she was

myself. And then afterwards—after what she told me, it was all so difficult, and I felt so unwilling to do it. Still I think I might have done it in time, and, indeed, was always trying to find an opportunity, but it became doubly difficult when—after. . . . There *was* an additional reason," she said frankly, blushing painfully as she remembered it, "that made it impossible. But I need not enter upon that."

"Yes, you need," he said; "you must not keep anything back. You must tell me everything, if I am to help you."

"I must ask you as a favour not to press me to tell you this," said Blanche; and she blushed deeper than ever as she spoke.

But he was inexorable.

"There must be no half confidences," he said; "trust me not at all, or trust me all in all."

And so, with averted eyes, she plunged once more into an unwelcome subject, and told him about his own letter to his mother, with the account of the remarks overheard in the dark gardens.

She hardly dared glance at him when she

had finished her story. She anxiously awaited his next observation.

There was a moment's silence; and then he said very quietly—

“I see your difficulty now.”

Something in his tone made Blanche look up, and she met the laughing glance of his eyes.

“The situation is not without its humorous side,” he said.

“Ah! but it is no laughing matter to me,” said Blanche earnestly. “Just think of the amount of duplicity and of acting a part my position entails—just the sort of thing I *hate*,” she concluded, with a touch of her old manner.

“Yes,” he said. “I know how foreign to your whole nature any sort of untruthfulness is.”

“Then what *am* I to do?” she exclaimed impetuously. “The time is getting so short. Rupert is upon me this evening, and your sudden arrival has complicated matters more than ever.”

Her manner was very distressed again, for the

situation returned upon her again, with all its force and difficulty.

"Leave it all to me, Miss Talbot," he said soothingly. "I will undertake to make it all right with my mother. Do not trouble yourself about it any more."

His firm, confident tone gave her the first feeling of relief she had felt for long; but still she hesitated.

"Are you sure you can?" she said. "Had I not better try and get Rupert away from here the first thing to-morrow, before there is a chance of their—or your—meeting?"

"No," he said, quickly. Then, apparently checking himself, he added: "I do not think that will be necessary; at anyrate, not in such a hurry. If you will only, as I tell you, leave it all to me, I will undertake to manage every-thing and everybody, Rupert included. Cannot you trust me?"

"Oh, yes, yes," she said earnestly; "only I cannot imagine how you are going to do it."

"That is *not* trusting," he said, smiling. "I promise you, I shall be equal to the task."

Blanche gave a long, deep sigh of relief,

looking up at him with such restful confidence that her eyes had for a moment the trusting expression of a little child.

"How can I ever thank you enough?" she said.

He looked quickly away; for her look had evidently touched him deeply. But all he said was—

"Not at all. I am bound to help you out of the scrape, since it is my fault that you have drifted into such an entanglement."

"Not *your* fault!" she exclaimed.

"Well, my misfortune then!" he said.

And the pathos of his unintentional *double entendre* brought a troubled look into her tell-tale face once more.

"I am sorry," he said, "more sorry than I can say, that your casual acquaintance with me should have brought you the trouble and annoyance which it no doubt has from the very first. No wonder you were so unwilling to make it!"

He stopped. He had looked at her smiling; but her head was turned away. Once more, as at F—— in the ballroom, he caught a side-

view of her face, and was distressed beyond measure to see the effect of his words.

He changed his bantering tone.

“Forgive me,” he said again, as he had said on that occasion, “indeed I did not think that what I said would distress you.”

They were the very words he had used before, spoken in the same earnest tone. They had arrived at the same point in their conversation when they had been interrupted by Lady Mary; on the only occasion till now when they had ever been alone together. Blanche realised this; realised also that there was no one to interrupt them now; no chance of their *tête-à-tête* being broken in upon this time. There was no human being near; nothing all round them but the solitude of the garden and the wild mountains and valleys beyond.

There was for a moment a silence that might be felt; one of those moments of silence that are so much more eloquent than speech.

The silence seemed to Blanche to presage something coming. She would not have broken it for worlds.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“MISS TALBOT!” he said, suddenly,—and there was that in his lowered voice and whole manner which made her heart beat quickly—“I will be truthful too. You have made me your confession. Now I am going to make you mine. Do not be afraid,” he added quickly, as she flushed scarlet. “I am not going to ask you anything. I am only going to tell you something. I had never meant to tell you; but it seems now as if I must. But before I begin, do me the justice to believe that if I had known you were here, I would never, never have come.”

Blanche turned very pale. She felt as if she had received a sudden blow.

“Why?” she said under her breath, and assuming an air of haughtiness which she was very far from feeling.

“I am going to tell you,” he answered; “and I will ask you as a favour to hear me out to the end with patience. Will you?”

She could not speak. She only bowed her head.

And then he began his tale—a tale which any woman might well be proud to hear; and which thrilled the girl to her very soul. It was well he had asked her to hear him out to the end, by which she gathered he meant without interrupting him, for she could not have spoken had her life depended on it.

She listened spellbound, holding on to the stone parapet in her agitation; listened breathless to words which in her wildest dreams she had never thought to hear him say, listened with a sense of astonishment, with a feeling that she could hardly believe that what she heard was really falling on her ear; that it could not be; that it was too good a thing to be possible: too fair a thing to be true.

For she could not mistake for a moment what the tale was which he was telling her: it was no doubt the old, old story, "old, but ever new."

And she listened with a profound sense of humility, a deep sense of unworthiness; of having been placed by him on a pinnacle where she had

no right to be; given a place to which she had no sort of claim.

She almost thought she ought to stop him, and tell him he had dressed up an image, that he had idealised her, that he had read into her character all the nobility, all the beauty of his own; and that she was unworthy, more unworthy than he could conceive, of all he was crediting her with.

Simple and straightforward was the tale he told.

It was the story of attraction at first sight, from the very moment of meeting, an attraction growing stronger and stronger day by day with daily intercourse and increasing intimacy; deepening into love and admiration, as her character revealed itself to him more and more; added to which was the fascination of trying to overcome the prejudice against him, which he knew from the first had existed.

And she stood there, listening with absorbed interest, listening with a joy past words, holding her breath, lest she should lose a word; and waiting joyfully for the moment when, passing from the past to the present, he

should plainly tell her his meaning, and ask the question to which she could so fully, so gladly respond.

But, as the story went on, a chill began to creep over her. A curious sense came to her that the tale to which she was so eagerly listening *was* a tale, and nothing more; that he was, as he had said at the beginning, only *telling* her something.

There was an accent of finality about all he said which grew upon her as she listened. It was as if the thing he was speaking of were at an end; all past and over; something which had been, but was no longer. There was too, a note of exculpation all through which smote coldly on her ear.

It was more as if he were offering an explanation, and an explanation, moreover, which partook of the nature of an apology. Instead of the story drawing them together as the telling of such a tale should do, she had a feeling that he seemed to get further and further away.

Already he seemed much further from her than he had done when he began to speak, and she had a feeling that when the story ended, so all

part or concern that she had ever had in it would come to an end too.

And at last he stopped. He leaned heavily against the parapet, and looked across at the wide expanse of mountain and valley beyond; with eyes which looked, but did not see. He had the air of a person who has made a confession; revealed what he had kept secret; which had weighed on either mind or conscience; which, she could not tell.

And there was a long silence.

When he spoke again, his voice was more natural; not so constrained. He no longer seemed to be holding himself in check. His tone was less abstract, more personal; but the finality was there still.

“There is of course nothing to be gained by my telling you all this,” he said; “but I felt as if I must. I have made my confession, and I have only to ask your forgiveness for my presumption. Of course I ought to have left F—— at once when I found how things were with me. I ought not to have stayed on so long. It was wrong. It was altogether inexcusable, I know. I was weak, culpably weak, but—I could not

tear myself away. And, after all, it is *I*, and I alone, who am the sufferer. It was to my own cost I stayed. And I *have* suffered—heavily.” He had kept his eyes studiously away from her hitherto; but now he suddenly turned them on her with a sad and regretful expression; and gazed long and earnestly at her as she stood with her head slightly bowed; and her eyes cast down, the long, dark lashes sweeping her flushed and averted cheek.

Then he suddenly lost command over himself.

“Never,” he said in a tone full of pathos and suppressed passion—let me speak out for once as I have never spoken to human being before and never shall again!—never had the sense of my misfortune been borne in upon me so clearly in all its bearings; never had I so fully and so painfully realised how Rupert’s act had wrecked my life, till I came to know—and love—Rupert’s sister!”

She had promised to hear him out to the end; but her resolution failed her as these words fell upon her ear.

“Why?” she said under her breath.

“*Why?*” he repeated bitterly. “Do not ask me so cruel a question.”

“But I *do* ask,” she said.

“Why,” he said reproachfully, “give me the pain of being more explicit?”

“Because I want to know,” she murmured, “I—I do not—understand.”

“You do not understand!” he exclaimed.

And there came an almost inaudible “No!”

“Tell me,” she added, her voice kept steady by a strong effort; her eyes fixed upon the distant mountains.

“How can I make it clearer?” he exclaimed in despair. “You, of all women—you who prize so highly and admire so much all that is strong and manly and prosperous, despise so much all that is—the reverse,—you *ought* to understand!”

She held up an imploring hand, as if to stop him, with a gesture of supplication which was more eloquent than words. He looked at her for a moment, and his eyes grew soft.

“Yes, I know,” he said gently: “you are tender-hearted, pitiful, all that a woman should

be; you were full of compunction when you found you had hit a man hard by a few careless observations which were never intended for his ear (which observations, let me tell you now, would *never* have had the effect they did, but for that man's attraction to yourself and consequent oversensitiveness to your opinion); and you are fuller than ever of compunction now, because you know what you ought never, never to have known, and which I would have given worlds to have kept from you. But you must remember that compunction does not alter *facts*."

"What facts?" he continued, answering a mute enquiry of her eyes, for she had not spoken. "The facts that I *am*, what I am. . . . a maimed and disfigured man, full of infirmities which rightly belong only to the old; a semi-invalid, condemned to lead an inactive and unmanly life. I have faced it long ago," he ended almost soothingly, as he marked the agitation Blanche could not altogether conceal, "so long, indeed, that the pain of it is almost over, the bitterness almost past, or, at least, I thought so, till"

He stopped abruptly.

But Blanche could bear it no longer; her feelings suddenly overcame her. She clasped her hands together, and, in a low voice, which thrilled with the emotion she felt, the words escaped her before she knew she was going to say them, "Oh! but think of it! Remember who was the cause of it all!"

"What has that to do with it?" he said shortly, and, as it seemed to her, rather coldly.

"To *you* perhaps nothing," she exclaimed, "but to *me* everything! Oh! cannot you put yourself in my place, and see that if there were anything I could do if I might be so happy as in any way, by any means"

She had better not have spoken.

His eyes had the same soft look in them, but his mouth was set. He gave a short bitter laugh.

"Yes, I see," he said. "I thought as much! The sister shall atone for the act of the brother; and the life the brother has wrecked, the sister shall—sacrifice hers to! *That* is what is passing in your mind? God forbid!" he exclaimed, with some agitation. "Anything rather than such a

thing as that! *No!*" he continued, recovering himself, and speaking more calmly, but with an incisiveness of utterance which seemed to make every word cut like a knife, "*a thousand times no!* I am selfish, no doubt—most men are—but I am *not* so selfish as that!"

He broke off suddenly, and turned his head away. Blanche could hear the beating of her own heart in the silence that followed his words.

It was a crucial moment—one of those moments in life when pride on both sides, or pride on one side, and a little too much humility on the other, have so often been the causes of a lifelong misunderstanding. And Blanche realised that such a moment had come to her now!

"*But if it is not a sacrifice!*" she murmured under her breath.

For one moment a look came into his eyes which lighted up his whole countenance; but the next it faded away, and their expression was sad and mournful as he turned to her again.

"Do not deceive yourself, my dear Miss Talbot," he said very earnestly, so earnestly that

his manner was almost solemn, "nor allow yourself for a moment to imagine you are actuated by motives other than you are. A great wave of pity is passing over you, and your innate sense of justice is dictating a certain course to you as an act of reparation. It is just what one might have expected from the nobility of your nature and your womanly capacity for self-sacrifice. But, *believe me*, yours is a momentary feeling, roused in you entirely by my misfortunes, and the painful shock of having discovered that your brother was their cause. It is nothing more, and I should be the meanest of men were I to take advantage of it. You are hardly at this moment a fit judge of your own feelings, so entirely has this feeling of compunction got hold of you, so completely has it carried you away. It has blinded your eyes to everything else, even to the fact of your own feeling towards me before there was any question of this compunction which is now influencing you so strongly. I only ask you to remember for a moment what that first feeling was."

"I—I—cannot," she murmured.

"Yes, you can," he said firmly, "if you will

give yourself the trouble to try and recall the early days at F——.” He paused a moment.

“Or if you cannot,” he resumed, “*I* can, and can remind you . . . Do you suppose I did not know it? Did you think I was really so blind as not to see it? I am not blaming you,” he added gently, as he saw the effect of his words upon Blanche, “I am simply trying to recall facts to your memory which you seem to have forgotten. Facts,” he said, with a laugh which was meant to be light, but which was really dull and mirthless, “are stubborn things. And, to my mind, first feelings, guided as they are by the great Laws of Attraction and Repulsion in which I so firmly believe, are much more real, much more trustworthy, and much more likely to be lasting, than any secondary ones which spring from such roots as compassion and compunction. I am not sure that I think compunction is ever, in any case, a true test of feeling of any kind. And, that being so,” he went on, with more agitation and excitement in his manner than he had hitherto shown, “I say, God forbid that in an impetuous moment of passing emotion you should do violence to your feelings, because your womanly compassion is

roused on my behalf. God forbid that your life, your bright young, opening life, so full of possibilities, should be sacrificed to mine! No! It has, I trust, a far happier and higher destiny. You must be the proud and happy wife of some fine, manly, prosperous fellow, who will be able to satisfy your ambition, and come up in every way to your high ideal of what a man should be, and whose appearance," he added, looking up at her as she stood with sudden admiration, "shall be in keeping with your own!"

"I do not mean to pain you," he went on with the utmost gentleness, as something like a sob broke from Blanche, "I am not saying this from any but the highest motives, and in the spirit of the truest kindness. You will see things in a truer light by-and-by; and some day you will thank me for not taking you at your word, while you are a prey to a passing emotion. Do not for a moment think I am ungrateful; or that I do not appreciate from the bottom of my heart the womanly spirit of self-sacrificing compassion which has moved you to entertain this idea. I *am* grateful, more grateful than I can say, and more deeply touched than I can ever find words to ex-

press. But I should be, as I said before, the meanest of men, were I to take advantage of a feeling which, however real and noble, is momentary, and will pass away."

He broke off for a moment. He was evidently more moved than he wished to show.

"And besides," he murmured half to himself.

"Besides?" she questioned, in a whisper.

"Besides," he resumed more firmly, "even if I could make up my mind to act so mean and selfish a part, I should not care to do it." He hesitated. "I am not proud," he added sadly, "it is not for a man like me to be so; but I *am* too proud to accept a sacrifice; or to accept pity instead of love. I should not care for second best. I must have all, or none. And yet! . . . Do not misunderstand me. It is not really pride, God knows! It is the deepest, deepest humility—the deep humility of a man who feels he has nothing to offer you!"

"Nothing?" she questioned softly.

"No," he answered, sadly, "nothing. Nothing, that is, but . . . what I have told you."

He spoke in a tone of deep feeling, and his voice just shook a little.

“And you call that *nothing!*” she said slowly.

He was silent.

But Blanche realised that it was the silence which meant consent, and that that silence would by him never be broken.

One more struggle between her love and her pride, and . . . the former was the stronger, and . . . triumphed.

“Then,” she said firmly, but with a little sob in her voice, “then, Rupert’s act has wrecked *two* lives.”

He started. The words were spoken so low that he had only just caught them, and he could not believe she had really said them. He was not sure he had heard her aright.

“*What* did you say?” he said, turning to her, and speaking in a low tone of suppressed agitation and excitement.

“I say,” was the almost inaudible answer, “that Rupert’s act has wrecked two lives.”

“What do you mean?” he cried. “Do not trifle with me, for God’s sake!”

"Not only your life," repeated Blanche, falteringly, "but *mine*!"

As she spoke, she raised her head, and lifting her eyes, shining with tears to his, she looked timidly but steadily at him, while a burning blush spread itself all over her face.

He stood spellbound, for he could not yet believe all that was contained in those words she had spoken; nor the true meaning of what they were meant to convey. He gazed long and searchingly at her, looking at her as if he would read her through and through, his penetrating glance seeming as if it would dive into the very secrets of her soul, find the clue to its hidden motives, search out and discover whether there was truth and sincerity there. But when he met the full glance of the eyes which were seeking his, he started and turned very pale. For that tell-tale face told its own story; there was no mistaking its meaning. He read there all that she could not bring herself to say; all that her maidenly reserve would not allow her to express.

It was no mere pity or compunction that brought *that* look into her face. They were

there, no doubt; but not they alone could have brought the expression which was shining and glowing in her eyes. And, as its true meaning dawned upon his unbelieving mind, a passionate exclamation of surprise and great joy broke from his lips.

There came into his own a radiant expression; and with a quick involuntary movement towards her, he held out both his hands!

There was a glorious sunset about half an hour after. It lighted up as before, only more brilliantly, the peaks of the distant mountains, turning their snow-clad summits into pink and pale gold.

But those two never saw it; its beauty was lost upon them. Still they stood there side by side, both alike forgetting how the time was passing, both alike oblivious of the fading of the day. It was one of those golden hours in life that come so seldom and pass all too soon.

A man's voice, calling, broke in at last upon it.

"Blanchie! Blan-chie! Where are you? I have been hunting for you everywhere!"

There was the sound of quick, advancing footsteps; of the humming of the scrap of a song, . . . , and in another moment, Rupert appeared on the terrace!

And, as his eyes fell upon the two figures side by side, he stood suddenly stock-still, and all the light died out of his face. Its bright expression assumed an agitated aspect. It is to be doubted if he even saw Blanche. His eyes were fixed on her companion.

Blanche started to her feet with an involuntary exclamation, alarmed at the change which had come over her brother's countenance, and his sudden pallor.

"Oh!" she said, in a low, frightened voice, "what had I better do?"

"Come with me," said Launcelot, quietly; "we will meet him together."

As he spoke he advanced to Rupert, and held out his hand with a bright smile of welcome.

"How are you, Rupert?" he said, "how glad I am to meet you once more! My dear old fellow," he continued, laying his hand on the young man's shoulder, as he saw the agitation

Rupert could not altogether control, "you must let bygones be bygones. We meet again, I assure you, under such happy circumstances, that the past may well be forgotten. You see before you, *believe me*, not only the happiest, but one of the most fortunate men in all the world. For," he added, as he turned to Blanche, and drew her forward, "your sister has just promised to be my wife!"

THE END.

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Mr. Isaacs 1 v. — Doctor Claudius 1 v. — To Leeward 1 v. — A Roman Singer 1 v. — An American Politician 1 v. — Zoroaster 1 v. — A Tale of a Lonely Parish 2 v. — Saracinesca 2 v. — Marzio's Crucifix 1 v. — Paul Patoff 2 v. — With the Immortals 1 v. — Greifenstein 2 v. — Sant' Ilario 2 v. — A Cigarette-Maker's Romance 1 v. — Khaled 1 v. — The Witch of Prague 2 v. — The Three Fates 2 v. — Don Orsino 2 v. — The Children of the King 1 v. — Pietro Ghisleri 2 v. — Marion Darche 1 v. — Katharine Lauderdale 2 v. — The Ralstons 2 v. — Casa Bracco 2 v. — Adam Johnstone's Son 1 v. — Taguisara 2 v. — A Rose of Yesterday 1 v. — Corleone 2 v. — Via Crucis 2 v.

S. R. Crockett.

The Raiders 2 v. — Cleg Kelly 2 v. — The Grey Man 2 v.

J. W. Cross, vide George Eliot's Life.

Mrs. Pender Cudlip, vide A. Thomas.

Miss Cummins (Am.), † 1866.
The Lamplighter 1 v. — Mabel Vaughan 1 v. — El Fureidis 1 v. — Haunted Hearts 1 v.

Paul Cushing.

The Blacksmith of Voe 2 v.

"Daily News."

War Correspondence, 1877, by Archibald Forbes and others 3 v.

Author of "Dark."

Dark 1 v.

Richard Harding Davis (Am.).
Galleher, etc. 1 v. — Van Bibber and Others 1 v.

Daniel De Foe, † 1731.

Robinson Crusoe 1 v.

Margaret Deland (Am.).

John Ward, Preacher 1 v.

Author of "Democracy" (Am.).
Democracy 1 v.

Author of "Demos," vide George Gissing.

Author of "Diary and Notes," vide Author of "Horace Templeton."

Charles Dickens, † 1870.

The Pickwick Club (with Portrait) 2 v. — American Notes 1 v. — Oliver Twist 1 v. — Nicholas Nickleby 2 v. — Sketches 1 v. — Martin Chuzzlewit 2 v. — A Christmas Carol; The Chimes; The Cricket on the Hearth 1 v. — Master Humphrey's Clock (Old Curiosity Shop; Barnaby Rudge, etc.) 3 v. — Pictures from Italy 1 v. — Dombey and Son 3 v. — David Copperfield 3 v. — Bleak House 4 v. — A Child's History of England (2 v. 80 M. 2,70.) — Hard Times 1 v. — Little Dorrit (with Illustrations) 4 v. — The Battle of Life; The Haunted Man 1 v. — A Tale of two Cities 2 v. — Hunted Down; The Uncommercial Traveller 1 v. — Great Expectations 2 v. — Christmas Stories, etc. 1 v. — Our Mutual Friend (with Illustrations) 4 v. — Somebody's Luggage; Mrs. Lirriper's Lodgings; Mrs. Lirriper's Legacy 1 v. — Doctor Marigold's Prescriptions; Mugby Junction 1 v. — The Mystery of Edwin Drood (with Illustrations) 2 v. — The Mudfog Papers, 1 v. — The Letters of Charles Dickens, edited by his Sister-in-law and his eldest Daughter 4 v. — *Vide* also Household

Words, Novels and Tales, and John Forster.

Charles Dickens & Wilkie Collins.
No Thoroughfare; The Late Miss Hollingsford 1 v.

Benjamin Disraeli, Lord Beaconsfield, † 1881.

Coningsby 1 v. — Sybil 1 v. — Contarini Fleming (with Portrait) 1 v. — Alroy 1 v. — Tancred 2 v. — Venetia 2 v. — Vivian Grey 2 v. — Henrietta Temple 1 v. — Lothair 2 v. — Endymion 2 v.

Ella Hepworth Dixon.
The Story of a Modern Woman 1 v.

W. Hepworth Dixon, † 1879.

Personal History of Lord Bacon 1 v. — The Holy Land 2 v. — New America 2 v. — Spiritual Wives 2 v. — Her Majesty's Tower 4 v. — Free Russia 2 v. — History of two Queens 6 v. — White Conquest 2 v. — Diana, Lady Lyle 2 v.

L. Dougall (Am.).
Beggars All 2 v.

Ménie Muriel Dowie.
A Girl in the Karpathians 1 v.

A. Conan Doyle.

The Sign of Four 1 v. — Micah Clarke 2 v. — The Captain of the Pole-Star, and other Tales 1 v. — The White Company 2 v. — A Study in Scarlet 1 v. — The Great Shadow, and Beyond the City 1 v. — The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes 2 v. — The Refugees 2 v. — The Firm of Girdlestone 2 v. — The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes 2 v. — Round the Red Lamp 1 v. — The Stark Munro Letters 1 v. — The Exploits of Brigadier Gerard 1 v. — Rodney Stone 2 v. — Uncle Bernac 1 v. — The Tragedy of the Korosko 1 v. — A Duet 1 v. — The Green Flag 1 v.

Professor Henry Drummond,
† 1897.

The Greatest Thing in the World; Pax Vobiscum; The Changed Life 1 v.

Dunton, vide Th. Watts-Dunton.

The Earl and the Doctor.
South Sea Bubbles 1 v.

The Earl of Dufferin.

Letters from High Latitudes 1 v.

Edward B. Eastwick, † 1883.

Autobiography of Lutfullah 1 v.

Maria Edgeworth, vide Series for the Young, p. 29.

Mrs. Annie Edwardes.

Archie Lovell 2 v. — Steven Lawrence, Yeoman 2 v. — Ought we to visit her? 2 v. — A Vagabond Heroine 1 v. — Leah: A Woman of Fashion 2 v. — A Blue-Stocking 1 v. — Jet: Her Face or Her Fortune? 1 v. — Vivian the Beauty 1 v. — A Ball-room Repentance 2 v. — A Girton Girl 2 v. — A Playwright's Daughter, and Bertie Griffiths 1 v. — Pearl-Powder 1 v. The Adventuress 1 v.

Amelia B. Edwards, † 1892.

Barbara's History 2 v. — Miss Carew 2 v. — Hand and Glove 1 v. — Half a Million of Money 2 v. — Debhamen's Vow 2 v. — In the Days of my Youth 2 v. — Untrodden Peaks and Unfrequented Valleys 1 v. — Monsieur Maurice 1 v. — A Night on the Borders of the Black Forest 1 v. — A Poetry-Book of Elder Poets 1 v. — A Thousand Miles up the Nile 2 v. — A Poetry-Book of Modern Poets 1 v. — Lord Brackenbury 2 v.

M. Betham-Edwards, v. Betham.

Edward Eggleston (Am.).

The Faith Doctor 2 v.

Barbara Elton (Am.).

Bethesda 2 v.

George Eliot (Miss Evans — Mrs. Cross), † 1880.

Scenes of Clerical Life 2 v. — Adam Bede 2 v. — The Mill on the Floss 2 v. — Silas Marner 1 v. — Romola 2 v. — Felix Holt 2 v. — Daniel Deronda 4 v. — The Lifted Veil, and Brother Jacob 1 v. — Impressions of Theophrastus Such 1 v. — Essays and Leaves from a Note-Book 1 v. — George Eliot's Life, edited by her Husband, J. W. Cross 4 v.

Author of "Elizabeth and her German Garden."

Elizabeth and her German Garden 1 v. — The Solitary Summer 1 v.

Mrs. Frances Elliot, † 1898.

Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy 2 v. — Old Court Life in France 2 v. — The Italians 2 v. — The Diary of an Idle Woman in Sicily 1 v. — Pictures of Old Rome 1 v. — The Diary of an Idle Woman in Spain 2 v. — The Red Cardinal 1 v. — The Story of Sophia 1 v. — Diary of an Idle Woman in Constantinople 1 v. — Old Court Life in Spain 2 v. — Roman Gossip 1 v.

Henry Erroll.
An Ugly Duckling 1 v.

E. Rentoul Easler.

The Way they loved at Grimpat 1 v.

The Authors of "Essays and Reviews."

Essays and Reviews. By various Authors 1 v.

Author of "Estelle Russell."

Estelle Russell 2 v.

Elsa D'Esterre-Keeling.

Three Sisters 1 v. — A Laughing Philosopher 1 v. — The Professor's Wooing 1 v. — In Thoughtland and in Dreamland 1 v. — Orchardscroft 1 v. — Appassionata 1 v. — Old Maids and Young 2 v. — The Queen's Serv 1 v.

Author of "Euthanasia."

Euthanasia 1 v.

Juliana Horatia Ewing, † 1885.

Jackanapes; The Story of a Short Life; Daddy Darwin's Dovecot 1 v. — A Flat Iron for a Farthing 1 v. — The Brownies, and other Tales 1 v.

Author of "Expiated."

Expiated 2 v.

F. J. Fargus, *vide* Hugh Conway.

F. W. (Dean) Farrar.

Darkness and Dawn 3 v.

Authors of "The Fate of Fenella."

The Fate of Fenella, by 24 Authors 1 v.

Percy Fendall, *vide* F. C. Philips.

George Manville Fenn.

The Parson o' Dumford 2 v. — The Clerk of Portwick 2 v.

Henry Fielding, † 1754.

Tom Jones 2 v.

Five Centuries

of the English Language and Literature: John Wycliffe. — Geoffrey Chaucer. — Stephen Hawes. — Sir Thomas More. — Edmund Spenser. — Ben Jonson. — John Locke. — Thomas Gray (vol. 500, published 1860) 1 v.

George Fleming (Am.).

Kismet 1 v. — Andromeda 2 v.

Archibald Forbes, † 1900.

My Experiences of the War between France and Germany 2 v. — Soldiering and Scribbling 1 v. — Memories and Studies of War and Peace 2 v. — *Vide* also "Daily News," War Correspondence.

R. E. Forrest.

Eight Days 2 v.

Mrs. Forrester.

Viva 2 v. — Rhona 2 v. — Roy and Viola 2 v. — My Lord and My Lady 2 v. — I have Lived and Loved 2 v. — June 2 v. — Omnia Vanitas 1 v. — Although he was a Lord, and other Tales 1 v. — Corisande, and other Tales 1 v. — Once Again 2 v. — Of the World, Worldly 1 v. — Dearest 2 v. — The Light of other Days 1 v. — Too Late Repented 1 v.

John Forster, † 1876.

The Life of Charles Dickens (with Illustrations and Portraits) 6 v. — Life and Times of Oliver Goldsmith 2 v.

Jessie Fothergill.

The First Violin 2 v. — Probation 2 v. — Made or Marred, and "One of Three" 1 v. — Kith and Kin 2 v. — Peril 2 v. — Borderland 2 v.

Author of "Found Dead," *vide*

James Payn.

Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler.

A Double Thread 2 v. — The Farringdons 2 v.

Caroline Fox, † 1871.

Memories of Old Friends from her Journals and Letters, edited by Horace N. Pym 2 v.

Author of "Frank Fairleg" (F. E. Smedley), † 1864.

Frank Fairleg 2 v.

M. E. Francia.

The Duenna of a Genius 1 v.

Harold Frederic (Am.), † 1898.

Illumination 2 v. — March Hares 1 v.

Edward A. Freeman, † 1892.

The Growth of the English Constitution 1 v. — Select Historical Essays 1 v. — Sketches from French Travel 1 v.

James Anthony Froude, † 1894.

Oceana 1 v. — The Spanish Story of the Armada, and other Essays 1 v.

Lady Georgiana Fullerton, † 1885.

Ellen Middleton 1 v. — Grantley Manor 2 v. — Lady Bird 2 v. — Too Strange not to be True 2 v. — Constance Sherwood 2 v. — A Stormy Life 2 v. — Mrs. Gerald's

Niece 2 v. — The Notary's Daughter 1 v. — The Lilies of the Valley, and The House of Penarvan 1 v. — The Countess de Bonneval 1 v. — Rose Leblanc 1 v. — Seven Stories 1 v. — The Life of Luisa de Carvajal 1 v. — A Will and a Way, and The Handkerchief at the Window 2 v. — Eliane 2 v. (by Mrs. Augustus Craven, translated by Lady Fullerton). — Laurentia 1 v.

Marguerite Gardiner, *vide* Lady Blessington.

Mrs. Gaskell, † 1865.

Mary Barton 1 v. — Ruth 2 v. — North and South 1 v. — Lizzie Leigh, and other Tales 1 v. — The Life of Charlotte Brontë 2 v. — Lois the Witch, etc. 1 v. — Sylvia's Lovers 2 v. — A Dark Night's Work 1 v. — Wives and Daughters 3 v. — Cranford 1 v. — Cousin Phillis, and other Tales 1 v.

Author of "Geraldine Hawthorne," *vide* Author of "Miss Molly."

Dorothea Gerard (Madame de Longard).

Lady Baby 2 v. — Recha 1 v. — Orthodox 1 v. — The Wrong Man 1 v. — A Spotless Reputation 1 v. — A Forgotten Sin 1 v. — One Year 1 v.

E. Gerard (Madame de Laszowska). A Secret Mission 1 v. — A Foreigner 2 v.

Agnes Giberne.
The Curate's Home 1 v.

George Gissing.

Demos. A Story of English Socialism 2 v. — New Grub Street 2 v.

Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone,
† 1898.

Rome and the Newest Fashions in Religion 1 v. — Bulgarian Horrors, and Russia in Turkistan, with other Tracts 1 v. — The Hellenic Factor in the Eastern Problem, with other Tracts 1 v.

Hal Godfrey (Charlotte O'Conor-Eccles).

The Rejuvenation of Miss Semaphore 1 v.

Oliver Goldsmith, † 1774.
Select Works (with Portrait) 1 v.

Edward J. Goodman.
Too Curious 1 v.

Julien Gordon (Am.).
A Diplomat's Diary 1 v.

Major-Gen. C. G. Gordon, † 1885.
His Journals at Kartoum. Introduction and Notes by A. E. Hake (with eighteen Illustrations) 2 v.

Mrs. Gore, † 1861.
Castles in the Air 1 v. — The Dean's Daughter 2 v. — Progress and Prejudice 2 v. — Mammon 2 v. — A Life's Lessons 2 v. — The Two Aristocracies 2 v. — Heckington 2 v.

Sarah Grand.
Our Manifold Nature 1 v.

Miss Grant.
Victor Lescar 2 v. — The Sun-Maid 2 v. — My Heart's in the Highlands 2 v. — Artiste 2 v. — Prince Hugo 2 v. — Cara Roma 2 v.

Maxwell Gray.
The Silence of Dean Maitland 2 v. — The Reproach of Annesley 2 v.

E. C. Grenville: Murray (Trois-Etoiles), † 1881.

The Member for Paris 2 v. — Young Brown 2 v. — The Boudoir Cabal 3 v. — French Pictures in English Chalk (*First Series*) 2 v. — The Russians of To-day 1 v. — French Pictures in English Chalk (*Second Series*) 2 v. — Strange Tales 1 v. — That Artful Vicar 2 v. — Six Months in the Ranks 1 v. — People I have met 1 v.

Ethel St. Clair Grimwood.
My Three Years in Manipur (with Portrait) 1 v.

W. A. Baillie Grohman.
Tyrol and the Tyrolese 1 v.

Archibald Clavering Gunter (Am.).
Mr. Barnes of New York 1 v.

F. Anstey Guthrie, *vide* Anstey.

Author of "Guy Livingstone" (George Alfred Laurence), † 1876.
Guy Livingstone 1 v. — Sword and Gown 1 v. — Barren Honour 1 v. — Border and Bastiller 1 v. — Maurice Dering 1 v. — Sans Merci 2 v. — Breaking a Butterfly 2 v. — Anteros 2 v. — Ha-garene 2 v.

John Habberton (Am.).

Helen's Babies & Other People's Children 1 v. — The Bowsham Puzzle 1 v. — One Tramp; Mrs. Mayburn's Twins 1 v.

H. Rider Haggard.

King Solomon's Mines 1 v. — She 2 v. — Jess 2 v. — Allan Quatermain 2 v. — The Witch's Head 2 v. — Maiwa's Revenge 1 v. — Mr. Meeson's Will 1 v. — Colonel Quaritch, V. C. 2 v. — Cleopatra 2 v. — Allan's Wife 1 v. — Beatrice 2 v. — Dawn 2 v. — Montezuma's Daughter 2 v. — The People of the Mist 2 v. — Joan Haste 2 v. — Heart of the World 2 v. — The Wizard 1 v. — Doctor Therne 1 v. — Swallow 2 v. — Black Heart and White Heart, and Elissa 1 v.

H. Rider Haggard & Andrew Lang.
The World's Desire 2 v.

A. E. Hake, *vide* Gen. Gordon.

Mrs. S. C. Hall, † 1881.

Can Wrong be Right? 1 v. — Marian 2 v.

Philip Gilbert Hamerton, † 1894.
Marmorne 1 v. — French and English 2 v.

**Miss Iza Hardy, *vide* Author of
"Not Easily Jealous."**

Thomas Hardy.

The Hand of Ethelberta 2 v. — Far from the Madding Crowd 2 v. — The Return of the Native 2 v. — The Trumpet-Major 2 v. — A Laodicean 2 v. — Two on a Tower 2 v. — A Pair of Blue Eyes 2 v. — A Group of Noble Dames 1 v. — Tess of the D'Urbervilles 2 v. — Life's Little Ironies 1 v. — Jude the Obscure 2 v.

Beatrice Harraden.

Ships that pass in the Night 1 v. — In Varying Moods 1 v. — Hilda Strafford, and The Remittance Man 1 v. — The Fowler 2 v.

Agnes Harrison.

Martin's Vineyard 1 v.

Bret Harte (Am.).

Prose and Poetry (Tales of the Argonauts: — The Luck of Roaring Camp; The Outcasts of Poker Flat, etc. — Spanish and American Legends; Condensed Novels; Civic and Character Sketches; Poems) 2 v. — Idyls of the Foothills 1 v. — Gabriel Conroy 2 v. — Two Men of Sandy Bar 1 v. — Thankful

Blossom, and other Tales 1 v. — The Story of a Mine 1 v. — Drift from Two Shores 1 v. — An Heiress of Red Dog, and other Sketches 1 v. — The Twins of Table Mountain, and other Tales 1 v. — Jeff Briggs's Love Story, and other Tales 1 v. — Flip, and other Stories 1 v. — On the Frontier 1 v. — By Shore and Sedge 1 v. — Maruja 1 v. — Snow-bound at Eagle's, and Devil's Ford 1 v. — The Crusade of the "Excelsior" 1 v. — A Millionaire of Rough-and-Ready, and other Tales 1 v. — Captain Jim's Friend, and the Argonauts of North Liberty 1 v. — Cressy 1 v. — The Heritage of Dedlow Marsh, and other Tales 1 v. — A Waif of the Plains 1 v. — A Ward of the Golden Gate 1 v. — A Sappho of Green Springs, and other Tales 1 v. — A First Family of Tasajara 1 v. — Colonel Starbottle's Client, and some other People 1 v. — Susy 1 v. — Sally Dows, etc. 1 v. — A Protégée of Jack Hamlin's, etc. 1 v. — The Bell-Ringer of Angel's, etc. 1 v. — Clarence 1 v. — In a Hollow of the Hills, and The Devotion of Enriquez 1 v. — The Ancestors of Peter Atherly, etc. 1 v. — Three Partners 1 v. — Tales of Trail and Town 1 v. — Stories in Light and Shadow 1 v. — Mr. Jack Hamlin's Mediation, and other Stories 1 v. — From Sand-Hill to Pine 1 v.

Sir Henry Havelock, *vide* Rev. W. Brock.

Nathaniel Hawthorne (Am.),

† 1864.

The Scarlet Letter 1 v. — Transformation (The Marble Faun) 2 v. — Passages from the English Note-Books of Nathaniel Hawthorne 2 v.

Mrs. Hector, *vide* Mrs. Alexander.

Author of "The Heir of Redclyffe," *vide* Charlotte M. Yonge.

Sir Arthur Helps, † 1875.
Friends in Council 2 v. — Ivan de Biron 2 v.

Mrs. Felicia Hemans, † 1835.
Select Poetical Works 1 v.

Maurice Hewlett.
The Forest Lovers 1 v. — Little Novels of Italy 1 v.

Robert Hichens.
Flames 2 v. — The Slave 2 v.

Admiral Hobart Pasha, † 1886.
Sketches from my Life 1 v.

John Oliver Hobbes.
The Gods, Some Mortals and Lord Wickenham 1 v.

Mrs. Cashel Hoey.
A Golden Sorrow 2 v. — Out of Court 2 v.

Annie E. Holdsworth.
The Years that the Locust hath Eaten 1 v. — The Gods Arrive 1 v. — The Valley of the Great Shadow 1 v.

Holme Lee, *vide* Harriet Parr.

Oliver Wendell Holmes (Am.),
† 1894.

The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table 1 v. — The Professor at the Breakfast-Table 1 v. — The Poet at the Breakfast-Table 1 v. — Over the Teacups 1 v.

Anthony Hope (Hawkins).
Mr. Witt's Widow 1 v. — A Change of Air 1 v. — Half a Hero 1 v. — The Indiscretion of the Duchess 1 v. — The God in the Car 1 v. — The Chronicles of Count Antonio 1 v. — Comedies of Courtship 1 v. — The Heart of Princess Osra 1 v. — Phroso 2 v. — Simon Dale 2 v. — Rupert of Hentzau 1 v. — The King's Mirror 2 v.

Tighe Hopkins.
An Idler in Old France 1 v.

Author of "Horace Templeton."
Diary and Notes 1 v.

Ernest William Hornung.
A Bride from the Bush 1 v. — Under Two Skies 1 v. — Tiny Luttrell 1 v. — The Boss of Taroomba 1 v. — My Lord Duke 1 v. — Young Blood 1 v. — Some Persons Unknown 1 v. — The Amateur Cracksman 1 v. — The Rogue's March 1 v. — The Belle of Toorak 1 v.

"Household Words."
Conducted by Charles Dickens. 1851-56.
36 v. — NOVELS and TALES reprinted from Household Words by Charles Dickens. 1856-59. 11 v.

Mrs. Houstoun, *vide* "Recommended to Mercy."

Author of "How to be Happy though Married."
How to be Happy though Married 1 v.
Blanche Willis Howard (Am.),
† 1899.

One Summer 1 v. — Aunt Serena 1 v. — Guenn 2 v. — Tony, the Maid, etc. 1 v. — The Open Door 2 v.

Blanche Willis Howard, † 1899,
& William Sharp.
A Fellowe and His Wife 1 v.

William Dean Howells (Am.).
A Foregone Conclusion 1 v. — The Lady of the Aroostook 1 v. — A Modern Instance 2 v. — The Undiscovered Country 1 v. — Venetian Life (with Portrait) 1 v. — Italian Journeys 1 v. — A Chance Acquaintance 1 v. — Their Wedding Journey 1 v. — A Fearful Responsibility, and Tonelli's Marriage 1 v. — A Woman's Reason 2 v. — Dr. Breen's Practice 1 v. — The Rise of Silas Lapham 2 v.

Thomas Hughes, † 1898.
Tom Brown's School-Days 1 v.

Mrs. Hungerford (Mrs. Argles),
† 1897.

Molly Bawn 2 v. — Mrs. Geoffrey 2 v. — Faith and Unfaith 2 v. — Portia 2 v. — Loÿs, Lord Berresford, and other Tales 1 v. — Her First Appearance, and other Tales 1 v. — Phyllis 2 v. — Rossmoyne 2 v. — Doris 2 v. — A Maiden all Forlorn, etc. 1 v. — A Passive Crime, and other Stories 1 v. — Green Pleasure and Grey Grief 2 v. — A Mental Struggle 2 v. — Her Week's Amusement, and Ugly Barrington 1 v. — Lady Branksmere 2 v. — Lady Valworth's Diamonds 1 v. — A Modern Circe 2 v. — Marvel 2 v. — The Hon. Mrs. Vereker 1 v. — Under-Currents 2 v. — In Durance Vile, etc. 1 v. — A Troublesome Girl, and other Stories 1 v. — A Life's Remorse 2 v. — A Born Coquette 2 v. — The Duchess 1 v. — Lady Verner's Flight 1 v. — A Conquering Heroine, and "When in Doubt" 1 v. — Nora Creina 2 v. — A Mad Prank, and other Stories 1 v. — The Hoyden 2 v. — The Red House Mystery 1 v. — An Unsatisfactory Lover 1 v. — Peter's Wife 2 v. — The Three Graces 1 v. — A Tug of War 1 v. — The Professor's Experiment 2 v. — A Point of Conscience 2 v. — A Lonely Girl 1 v. — Lovice 1 v. — The Coming of Chloe 1 v.

Mrs. Hunt, *vide* Averil Beaumont.

Violet Hunt.
The Human Interest 1 v.

Jean Ingelow, † 1897.
Off the Skellings 3 v. — Poems 2 v. — Fated to be Free 2 v. — Sarah de Berenger 2 v. — Don John 2 v.

The Hon. Lady Inglis.
The Siege of Lucknow 1 v.

John H. Ingram, *vide* E. A. Poe.

Iota, *vide* Mrs. Mannington Caffyn.

Washington Irving (Am.), † 1859.
The Sketch Book (with Portrait) 1 v. — The Life of Mahomet 1 v. — Lives of the Successors of Mahomet 1 v. — Oliver Goldsmith 1 v. — Chronicles of Wolfert's Roost 1 v. — Life of George Washington 5 v.

Mrs. Helen Jackson (H. H.) (Am.), † 1885.
Ramona 2 v.

W. W. Jacobs.
Many Cargoes 1 v. — The Skipper's Wooing, and The Brown Man's Servant 1 v. — Sea Urchins 1 v.

Charles T. C. James.
Holy Wedlock 1 v.

G. P. R. James, † 1860.
Morley Ernstine (with Portrait) 1 v. — Forest Days 1 v. — The False Heir 1 v. — Arabella Stuart 1 v. — Rose d'Albret 1 v. — Arrah Neil 1 v. — Agincourt 1 v. — The Smuggler 1 v. — The Step-Mother 2 v. — Beauchamp 1 v. — Heidelberg 1 v. — The Gipsy 1 v. — The Castle of Ehrenstein 1 v. — Darnley 1 v. — Russell 2 v. — The Convict 2 v. — Sir Theodore Bronghton 2 v.

Henry James (Am.).
The American 2 v. — The Europeans 1 v. — Daisy Miller; An International Episode; Four Meetings 1 v. — Roderick Hudson 2 v. — The Madonna of the Future, etc. 1 v. — Eugene Pickering, etc. 1 v. — Confidence 1 v. — Washington Square, etc. 2 v. — The Portrait of a Lady 3 v. — Foreign Parts 1 v. — French Poets and Novelists 1 v. — The Siege of London; The Point of View; A Passionate Pilgrim 1 v. — Portraits of Places 1 v. — A Little Tour in France 1 v.

J. Cordy Jeaffreson.
A Book about Doctors 2 v. — A Woman in spite of Herself 2 v. — The Real Lord Byron 3 v.

Mrs. Charles Jenkin, † 1885.
"Who Breaks—Pays" 1 v. — Skirmishing 1 v. — Once and Again 2 v. — Two French Marriages 2 v. — Within an Ace 1 v. — Jupiter's Daughters 1 v.

Edward Jenkins.
Ginx's Baby, his Birth and other Misfortunes; Lord Bantam 2 v.

Author of "Jennie of 'The Prince's," *vide* B. H. Buxton.

Jerome K. Jerome.
The Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow 1 v. — Diary of a Pilgrimage, and Six Essays 1 v. — Novel Notes 1 v. — Sketches in Lavender, Blue and Green 1 v. — The Second Thoughts of an Idle Fellow 1 v. — Three Men on the Bummel 1 v.

Douglas Jerrold, † 1857.
History of St. Giles and St. James 2 v. — Men of Character 2 v.

Author of "John Halifax, Gentleman," *vide* Mrs. Craik.

Johnny Ludlow, *vide* Mrs. Henry Wood.

Samuel Johnson, † 1784.
Lives of the English Poets 2 v.

Emily Jolly.
Colonel Dacre 2 v.

Author of "Joshua Davidson," *vide* Mrs. E. Lynn Linton.

Miss Julia Kavanagh, † 1877.
Nathalie 2 v. — Daisy Burns 2 v. — Grace Lee 2 v. — Rachel Gray 1 v. — Adèle 3 v. — A Summer and Winter in the Two Sicilies 2 v. — Seven Years, and other Tales 2 v. — French Women of Letters 1 v. — English Women of Letters 1 v. — Queen Mab 2 v. — Beatrice 2 v. — Sybil's Second Love 2 v. — Dora 2 v. — Silvia 2 v. — Bessie 2 v. — John Dorrien 3 v. — Two Lilies 2 v. — Forget-me-nots 2 v. — *Vide* also Series for the Young, p. 29.

Annie Keary, † 1879.
Oldbury 2 v. — Castle Daly 2 v.

D'Esterre-Keeling, *vide* Esterre.

Thomas a Kempis.

The Imitation of Christ. Translated from the Latin by W. Benham, B.D. 1 v.

Richard B. Kimball (Am.), †

Saint Leger 1 v. — Romance of Student Life Abroad 1 v. — Undercurrents 1 v. — Was he Successful? 1 v. — To-Day in New York 1 v.

Alexander William Kinglake,

† 1891.

Eothen 1 v. — The Invasion of the Crimea 14 v.

Charles Kingsley, † 1875.

Yeast 1 v. — Westward ho! 2 v. — Two Years ago 2 v. — Hypatia 2 v. — Alton Locke 1 v. — Hereward the Wake 2 v. — At Last 2 v. — His Letters and Memories of his Life, edited by his Wife 2 v.

Henry Kingsley, † 1876.

Ravenshooe 2 v. — Austin Elliot 1 v. — Geoffrey Hamlyn 2 v. — The Hillyars and the Burtons 2 v. — Leighton Court 1 v. — Valentin 1 v. — Oakshott Castle 1 v. — Reginald Hetheridge 2 v. — The Grange Garden 2 v.

Albert Kinross.

An Opera and Lady Grasmere 1 v.

Rudyard Kipling.

Plain Tales from the Hills 1 v. — The Second Jungle Book 1 v. — The Seven Seas 1 v. — "Captains Courageous" 1 v. — The Day's Work 1 v. — A Fleet in Being 1 v. — Stalky & Co. 1 v. — From Sea to Sea 2 v. — The City of Dreadful Night 1 v.

May Laffan.

Flitters, Tatters, and the Counsellor, etc. 1 v.

Charles Lamb, † 1834.

The Essays of Elia and Eliana 1 v.

Mary Langdon (Am.).

Ida May 1 v.

Author of "The Last of the Cavaliers" (Miss Piddington).

The Last of the Cavaliers 2 v. — The Gain of a Loss 2 v.

Mme de Laszowska, *vide* E. Gerard.

The Hon. Emily Lawless.

Hurriah 1 v.

George Alfred Laurence, *vide* Author of "Guy Livingstone."

"Leaves from the Journal of our Life in the Highlands," *vide* Victoria R. I.

Holme Lee, † 1900, *vide* Harriet Parr.

J. S. Le Fanu, † 1873.
Uncle Silas 2 v. — Guy Deverell 2 v.

Mark Lemon, † 1870.

Wait for the End 2 v. — Loved at Last 2 v. — Falkner Lyle 2 v. — Leyton Hall, and other Tales 2 v. — Golden Fetter 2 v.

Charles Lever, † 1872.

The O'Donoghue 1 v. — The Knight of Gwynne 3 v. — Arthur O'Leary 2 v. — Harry Lorrequer 2 v. — Charles O'Malley 3 v. — Tom Burke of "Ours" 3 v. — Jack Hinton 2 v. — The Daltons 4 v. — The Dodd Family Abroad 3 v. — The Martins of Cro' Martin 3 v. — The Fortunes of Glencore 2 v. — Roland Cashel 3 v. — Davenport Dunn 3 v. — Confessions of Con Cregan 2 v. — One of Them 2 v. — Maurice Tiernay 2 v. — Sir Jasper Carew 2 v. — Barrington 2 v. — A Day's Ride 2 v. — Luttrell of Arran 2 v. — Tony Butler 2 v. — Sir Brook Fossbrooke 2 v. — The Brambleighs of Bishop's Folly 2 v. — A Kent in a Cloud 1 v. — That Boy of Northcott's 1 v. — St. Patrick's Eve; Paul Gosslett's Confessions 1 v. — Lord Kilgobbin 2 v.

S. Levett-Yeats.

The Honour of Savelli 1 v. — The Chevalier d'Auriac 1 v.

G. H. Lewes, † 1878.

Ranthorpe 1 v. — The Physiology of Common Life 2 v. — On Actors and the Art of Acting 1 v.

Mrs. E. Lynn Linton, † 1898.

The true History of Joshua Davidson 1 v. — Patricia Kemball 2 v. — The Atonement of Leam Dundas 2 v. — The World well Lost 2 v. — Under which Lord? 2 v. — With a Silken Thread, and other Stories 1 v. — Todhuners' at Loanin' Head, and other Stories 1 v. — "My Love!" 2 v. — The Girl of the Period, and other Social Essays 1 v. — Ione 2 v.

Laurence W. M. Lockhart, † 1882.
Mine is Thine 2 v.

Lord Augustus Loftus.

Diplomatic Reminiscences 1837-1862
(with Portrait) 2 v.

Mme de Longard, *vide* D. Gerard.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
(Am.), † 1882.

Poetical Works (with Portrait) 3 v. —
The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri
3 v. — The New-England Tragedies 1 v. —
The Divine Tragedy 1 v. — Flower-de-
Luce, and Three Books of Song 1 v. —
The Masque of Pandora, and other Poems
1 v.

Margaret Lonsdale.

Sister Dora (with a Portrait of Sister
Dora) 1 v.

Author of "A Lost Battle."
A Lost Battle 2 v.

Sir John Lubbock, Bart.

The Pleasures of Life 1 v. — The Beauties
of Nature (with Illustrations) 1 v. —
The Use of Life 1 v. — Scenery of Switzer-
land (with Illustrations) 2 v.

"Lutfullah," *vide* Eastwick.

Edna Lyall.

We Two 2 v. — Donovan 2 v. — In
the Golden Days 2 v. — Knight-Errant
2 v. — Won by Waiting 2 v. — Wayfaring
Men 2 v. — Hope the Hermit 2 v. —
Doreen 2 v.

Lord Lytton, *vide* E. Bulwer.

Robert Lord Lytton (Owen
Meredith), † 1891.

Poems 2 v. — Fables in Song 2 v.

Maarten Maartens.

The Sin of Joost Avelingh 1 v. — An
Old Maid's Love 2 v. — God's Fool 2 v. —
The Greater Glory 2 v. — My Lady
Nobody 2 v. — Her Memory 1 v.

Thomas Babington, Lord Mac-
aulay, † 1859.

History of England (with Portrait)
10 v. — Critical and Historical Essays 5 v. —
Lays of Ancient Rome 1 v. — Speeches
2 v. — Biographical Essays 1 v. — Wil-
liam Pitt, Atterbury 1 v. — (See also
Trevelyan).

Justin McCarthy.

The Waterdale Neighbours 2 v. —
Dear Lady Disdain 2 v. — Miss Misan-
thrope 2 v. — A History of our own Times
5 v. — Donna Quixote 2 v. — A short
History of our own Times 2 v. — A
History of the Four Georges vols. 1 &
2. — A History of our own Times vols.
6 & 7 (supplemental).

George Mac Donald.

Alec Forbes of Howglen 2 v. — Annals
of a Quiet Neighbourhood 2 v. — David
Elginbrod 2 v. — The Vicar's Daughter
2 v. — Malcolm 2 v. — St. George and
St. Michael 2 v. — The Marquis of
Loesie 2 v. — Sir Gibbie 2 v. — Mary
Marston 2 v. — The Gifts of the Child
Christ, and other Tales 1 v. — The Prin-
cess and Curdie 1 v.

Mrs. Mackarness, † 1881.

Sunbeam Stories 1 v. — A Peerless
Wife 2 v. — A Mingled Yarn 2 v.

Eric Mackay, † 1898.

Love Letters of a Violinist, and other
Poems 1 v.

Charles McCarthy (Am.).
Old Fort Duquesne 2 v.

Ian Maclarens.

Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush 1 v. —
The Days of Auld Langsyne 1 v.

Norman Macleod, † 1872.

The Old Lieutenant and his Son 1 v.

James Macpherson, † 1696, *vide*
Ossian.

Mrs. Macquoid.

Patty 2 v. — Miriam's Marriage 2 v. —
Pictures across the Channel 2 v. — Too
Soon 1 v. — My Story 2 v. — Diane 2 v. —
Beside the River 2 v. — A Faithful
Lover 2 v.

Author of "Mademoiselle Mori"
(Miss Roberts).

Mademoiselle Mori 2 v. — Denise 1 v. —
Madame Fontenoy 1 v. — On the
Edge of the Storm 1 v. — The Atelier du
Lys 2 v. — In the Olden Time 2 v.

Lord Mahon, *vide* Stanhope.

E. S. Maine.
Scarscliff Rocks 2 v.

Lucas Malet.
Colonel Enderby's Wife 2 v.

The Earl of Malmesbury, G.C.B.
Memoirs of an Ex-Minister 3 v.

Mary E. Mann.
A Winter's Tale 1 v. — The Cedar Star 1 v.

Robert Blanchford Mansfield.
The Log of the Water Lily 1 v.

Mark Twain, *vide* Twain.

Author of "Marmorne," *vide* P. G. Hamerton.

Capt. Marryat, † 1848.
Jacob Faithful (with Portrait) 1 v. —
Percival Keene 1 v. — Peter Simple 1 v. —
Japhet in Search of a Father 1 v. —
Monsieur Violet 1 v. — The Settlers in
Canada 1 v. — The Mission 1 v. —
The Privateer's-Man 1 v. — The Children of
the New-Forest 1 v. — Valerie 1 v. —
Mr. Midshipman Easy 1 v. — The King's
Own 1 v.

Florence Marryat, † 1899.
Love's Conflict 2 v. — For Ever and
Ever 2 v. — The Confessions of Gerald
Estcourt 2 v. — Nelly Brooke 2 v. —
Véronique 2 v. — Petronel 2 v. — Her
Lord and Master 2 v. — The Prey of the
Gods 1 v. — Life and Letters of Captain
Marryat 1 v. — Mad Dumaresq 2 v. —
No Intentions 2 v. — Fighting the Air
2 v. — A Star and a Heart; An Utter Im-
possibility 1 v. — The Poison of Asps,
and other Stories 1 v. — A Lucky Disap-
pointment, and other Stories 1 v. — "My
own Child" 2 v. — Her Father's Name
2 v. — A Harvest of Wild Oats 2 v. —
A Little Stepson 1 v. — Written in Fire
2 v. — Her World against a Lie 2 v. —
A Broken Blossom 2 v. — The Root of
all Evil 2 v. — The Fair-haired Alda 2 v. —
With Cupid's Eyes 2 v. — My Sister the
Actress 2 v. — Phyllida 2 v. — How they
loved Him 2 v. — Facing the Footlights
(with Portrait) 2 v. — A Moment of Mad-
ness, and other Stories 1 v. — The Ghost
of Charlotte Cray, and other Stories
1 v. — Peeress and Player 2 v. — Under
the Lilies and Roses 2 v. — The Heart
of Jane Warner 2 v. — The Heir Pre-
sumptive 2 v. — The Master Passion 2 v. —
Spiders of Society 2 v. — Driven to Bay
2 v. — A Daughter of the Tropics 2 v. —

Gentleman and Courter 2 v. — On Cir-
cumstantial Evidence 2 v. — Mount Eden.
A Romance 2 v. — Blindfold 2 v. — A
Scarlet Sin 1 v. — A Bankrupt Heart 2 v. —
The Spirit World 1 v. — The Beautiful
Soul 1 v. — At Heart a Rake 2 v. —
The Strange Transfiguration of Hannah
Stubbs 1 v. — The Dream that Stayed
2 v. — A Passing Madness 1 v. — The
Blood of the Vampire 1 v. — A Soul on
Fire 1 v. — Iris the Avenger 1 v.

Mrs. Anne Marsh (Caldwell),
† 1874.
Ravenscliffe 2 v. — Emilia Wyndham
2 v. — Castle Avon 2 v. — Aubrey 2 v. —
The Heiress of Haughton 2 v. — Evelyn
Marston 2 v. — The Rose of Ashurst
2 v.

Mrs. Emma Marshall, † 1899.
Mrs. Mainwaring's Journal 1 v. —
Beavenuta 1 v. — Lady Alice 1 v. —
Dayspring 1 v. — Life's Aftermath 1 v. —
In the East Country 1 v. — No. XIII; or,
The Story of the Lost Vestal 1 v. — In
Four Reigns 1 v. — On the Banks of the
Ouse 1 v. — In the City of Flowers 1 v. —
Alma 1 v. — Under Salisbury Spire 1 v. —
The End Crowns All 1 v. — Winchester
Meads 1 v. — Eventide Light 1 v. —
Winifrede's Journal 1 v. — Bristol Bells
1 v. — In the Service of Rachel Lady
Russell 1 v. — A Lily among Thorns 1 v. —
Penshurst Castle 1 v. — Kensington
Palace 1 v. — The White King's Daughter
1 v. — The Master of the Musicians 1 v. —
An Escape from the Tower 1 v. — A
Haunt of Ancient Peace 1 v. — Castle
Meadow 1 v. — In the Choir of West-
minster Abbey 1 v. — The Young Queen
of Hearts 1 v. — Under the Dome of St.
Paul's 1 v. — The Parson's Daughter
1 v.

Helen Mathers (Mrs. Henry Reeves).
"Cherry Ripe!" 2 v. — "Land o' the
Leal" 1 v. — My Lady Green Sleeves 2 v. —
As he comes up the Stair, etc. 1 v. —
Sam's Sweetheart 2 v. — Eyre's Acquittal
2 v. — Found Out 1 v. — Murder or Man-
slaughter? 1 v. — The Fashion of this
World (80 Pf.) — Blind Justice, and "Who,
being dead, yet Speaketh" 1 v. — What
the Glass Told, and A Study of a Woman
1 v. — Bam Wildfire 2 v. — Becky 2 v.

Colonel Maurice.
The Balance of Military Power in
Europe 1 v.

George du Maurier, † 1896.
Trilby 2 v. — The Martian 2 v.

Mrs. Maxwell, *vide* Miss Braddon.

Author of "Mehalah," *vide* Baring-Gould.

George J. Whyte Melville, † 1878.

Kate Coventry 1 v. — Holmby House 2 v. — Digby Grand 1 v. — Good for Nothing 2 v. — The Queen's Maries 2 v. — The Gladiators 2 v. — The Brookes of Bridlemere 2 v. — Cerise 2 v. — The Interpreter 2 v. — The White Rose 2 v. — M. or N. 1 v. — Contraband 1 v. — Sarchedon 2 v. — Uncle John 2 v. — Katerfelto 1 v. — Sister Louise 1 v. — Rosine 1 v. — Roys' Wife 2 v. — Black but Comely 2 v. — Riding Recollections 4 v.

Memorial Volumes, *vide* Five Centuries (vol. 500); The New Testament (vol. 1000); Henry Morley (vol. 2000).

George Meredith.

The Ordeal of Richard Feverel 2 v. — Beauchamp's Career 2 v. — The Tragic Comedians 1 v. — Lord Ormont and his Aminta 2 v. — The Amazing Marriage 2 v.

Owen Meredith, *vide* Robert Lord Lytton.

Leonard Merrick.

The Man who was good 1 v. — This Stage of Fools 1 v. — Cynthia 1 v. — One Man's View 1 v. — The Actor-Manager 1 v.

Henry Seton Merriman.

Young Mistley 1 v. — Prisoners and Captives 2 v. — From One Generation to Another 1 v. — With Edged Tools 2 v. — The Sowers 2 v. — Flotsam 1 v. — In Kedar's Tents 1 v. — Roden's Corner 1 v.

H. S. Merriman & S. G. Tallentyre.
The Money-Spinner, etc. 1 v.

John Milton, † 1674.
Poetical Works 1 v.

Author of "Miss Molly."
Geraldine Hawthorne 1 v.

Author of "Molly Bawn," *vide* Mrs. Hungerford.

Florence Montgomery.

Misunderstood 1 v. — Thrown Together 2 v. — Thwarted 1 v. — Wild Mike 1 v. — Seaforth 2 v. — The Blue Veil 1 v. — Transformed 1 v. — The Fisherman's Daughter, etc. 1 v. — Colonel Norton 2 v.

Frank Frankfort Moore.

"I Forbid the Banns" 2 v. — A Gray Eye or So 2 v. — One Fair Daughter 2 v. — They Call it Love 2 v. — The Jessamy Bride 1 v. — The Millionaires 1 v.

George Moore.

Celibates 1 v. — Evelyn Innes 2 v.

Thomas Moore, † 1852.

Poetical Works (with Portrait) 5 v.

Lady Morgan, † 1859.

Memoirs 3 v.

Henry Morley, † 1894.

Of English Literature in the Reign of Victoria. With Facsimiles of the Signatures of Authors in the Tauchnitz Edition (v. 2000, published 1881) 1 v.

William Morris.

A Selection from his Poems. Edited with a Memoir by F. Hueffer 1 v.

Arthur Morrison.

Tales of Mean Streets 1 v. — A Child of the Jago 1 v. — To London Town 1 v.

James Fullarton Muirhead.

The Land of Contrasts 1 v.

Miss Mulock, *vide* Mrs. Craik.

David Christie Murray.

Rainbow Gold 2 v.

Grenville: Murray, *vide* Grenville.

Author of "My Little Lady," *vide* E. Frances Poynter.

The New Testament.

The Authorised English Version, with Introduction and Various Readings from the three most celebrated Manuscripts of the Original Text, by Constantine Tischendorf (vol. 1000, published 1869) 1 v.

Mrs. C. J. Newby.

Common Sense 2 v.

Dr. J. H. Newman (Cardinal Newman), † 1890.
Callista 1 v.

Mrs. Nicholls, *vide* Currer Bell.

Author of "Nina Balatka," *vide* Anthony Trollope.

Author of "No Church" (F. Robinson).

No Church 2 v. — Owen:—a Waif 2 v.

Lady Augusta Noel.

From Generation to Generation 1 v. — Hithersea Mere 2 v.

W. E. Norris.

My Friend Jim 1 v. — A Bachelor's Blunder 2 v. — Major and Minor 2 v. — The Rogue 2 v. — Miss Shafto 2 v. — Mrs. Fenton 1 v. — Misadventure 2 v. — Saint Ann's 1 v. — A Victim of Good Luck 1 v. — The Dancer in Yellow 1 v. — Clarissa Furiosa 2 v. — Marietta's Marriage 2 v. — The Fight for the Crown 1 v. — The Widower 1 v. — Giles Ingilby 1 v.

Hon. Mrs. Norton, † 1877.

Stuart of Dunleath 2 v. — Lost and Saved 2 v. — Old Sir Douglas 2 v.

Author of "Not Easily Jealous" (Miss Iza Hardy).

Not Easily Jealous 2 v.

"Novels and Tales," *vide* "Household Words."

Charlotte O'Conor-Eccles, *vide* Hal Godfrey.

Laurence Oliphant, † 1888.

Altiora Peto 2 v. — Masollam 2 v.

Mrs. Oliphant, † 1897.

The Last of the Mortimers 2 v. — Mrs. Margaret Maitland 1 v. — Agnes 2 v. — Madonna Mary 2 v. — The Minister's Wife 2 v. — The Rector and the Doctor's Family 1 v. — Salem Chapel 2 v. — The Perpetual Curate 2 v. — Miss Marjoribanks 2 v. — Ombrà 2 v. — Memoir of Count de Montalembert 2 v. — May 2 v. — Innocent 2 v. — For Love and Life 2 v. — A Rose in June 1 v. — The Story of Valentine and his Brother 2 v. — White-ladies 2 v. — The Curate in Charge 1 v. —

Phosbe, Junior 2 v. — Mrs. Arthur 2 v. — Carità 2 v. — Young Musgrave 2 v. — The Primrose Path 2 v. — Within the Precincts 3 v. — The Greatest Heiress in England 2 v. — He that will not when he may 2 v. — Harry Joscelyn 2 v. — In Trust 2 v. — It was a Lover and his Lass 3 v. — The Ladies Lindores 3 v. — Hester 3 v. — The Wizard's Son 3 v. — A Country Gentleman and his Family 2 v. — Neighbours on the Green 1 v. — The Duke's Daughter 1 v. — The Fugitives 1 v. — Kirsteen 2 v. — Life of Laurence Oliphant and of Alice Oliphant, his Wife 2 v. — The Little Pilgrim in the Unseen 1 v. — The Heir Presumptive and the Heir Apparent 2 v. — The Sorceress 2 v. — Sir Robert's Fortune 2 v. — The Ways of Life 1 v. — Old Mr. Tredgold 2 v.

"One who has kept a Diary," *vide* George W. E. Russell.

Ossian.

The Poems of Ossian. Translated by James Macpherson 1 v.

Ouida.

Idalia 2 v. — Tricotin 2 v. — Puck 2 v. — Chandos 2 v. — Strathmore 2 v. — Under two Flags 2 v. — Folle-Farine 2 v. — A Leaf in the Storm; A Dog of Flanders; A Branch of Lilac; A Provence Rose 1 v. — Cecil Castlemaine's Gage, and other Novelettes 1 v. — Madame la Marquise, and other Novelettes 1 v. — Pascarel 2 v. — Held in Bondage 2 v. — Two little Wooden Shoes 1 v. — Signa (with Portrait) 3 v. — In a Winter City 1 v. — Ariadnè 2 v. — Friendship 2 v. — Moths 3 v. — Pipistrello, and other Stories 1 v. — A Village Commune 2 v. — In Maremma 3 v. — Bimbi 1 v. — Wanda 3 v. — Frescoes and other Stories 1 v. — Princess Napraxine 3 v. — Othmar 3 v. — A Rainy June (60 Pf.). Don Gesualdo (60 Pf.). — A House Party 1 v. — Guilderoy 2 v. — Syrlin 3 v. — Ruffino, and other Stories 1 v. — Santa Barbara, etc. 1 v. — Two Offenders 1 v. — The Silver Christ, etc. 1 v. — Toxin, and other Papers 1 v. — Le Selve, and Tonia 1 v. — The Massarenes 2 v. — An Altruist, and Four Essays 1 v. — La Strega, and other Stories 1 v. — The Waters of Edera 1 v.

Author of "The Outcasts," *vide* Roy Tellet.

Gilbert Parker.

The Battle of the Strong 2 v.

Harriet Parr (Holme Lee), † 1900.
 Basil Godfrey's Caprice 2 v. — For Richer, for Poorer 2 v. — The Beautiful Miss Barrington 2 v. — Her Title of Honour 1 v. — Echoes of a Famous Year 1 v. — Katherine's Trial 1 v. — The Vicissitudes of Bessie Fairfax 2 v. — Ben Milner's Wooing 1 v. — Straightforward 2 v. — Mrs. Denys of Cote 2 v. — A Poor Squire 1 v.

Mrs. Parr.

Dorothy Fox 1 v. — The Prescotts of Pamphilion 2 v. — The Gosau Smithy, etc. 1 v. — Robin 2 v. — Loyalty George 2 v.

George Paston.

A Study in Prejudices 1 v. — A Fair Deceiver 1 v.

Mrs. Paul, *vide* Author of "Still Waters."

Author of "Paul Ferroll" (Mrs. Caroline Clive).

Paul Ferroll 1 v. — Year after Year 1 v. — Why Paul Ferroll killed his Wife 1 v.

James Payn, † 1898.

Found Dead 1 v. — Gwendoline's Harvest 1 v. — Like Father, like Son 2 v. — Not Wooed, but Won 2 v. — Cecil's Tryst 1 v. — A Woman's Vengeance 2 v. — Murphy's Master 1 v. — In the Heart of a Hill, and other Stories 1 v. — At Her Mercy 2 v. — The Best of Husbands 2 v. — Walter's Word 2 v. — Halves 2 v. — Fallen Fortunes 2 v. — What He cost Her 2 v. — By Proxy 2 v. — Less Black than we're Painted 2 v. — Under one Roof 2 v. — High Spirits 1 v. — High Spirits (Second Series) 1 v. — A Confidential Agent 2 v. — From Exile 2 v. — A Grape from a Thorn 2 v. — Some Private Views 1 v. — For Cash Only 2 v. — Kit: A Memory 2 v. — The Canon's Ward (with Portrait) 2 v. — Some Literary Recollections 1 v. — The Talk of the Town 1 v. — The Luck of the Darrells 2 v. — The Heir of the Ages 2 v. — Holiday Tasks 1 v. — Glow-Worm Tales (First Series) 1 v. — Glow-Worm Tales (Second Series) 1 v. — A Prince of the Blood 2 v. — The Mystery of Mirbridge 2 v. — The Burnt Million 2 v. — The Word and the Will 2 v. — Sunny Stories, and some Shady Ones 1 v. — A Modern Dick Whittington 2 v. — A Stumble on the Threshold 2 v. — A Trying Patient 1 v. — Gleams of Memory, and The Eavesdropper 1 v. —

In Market Overt 1 v. — The Disappearance of George Drifell, and other Tales 1 v. — Another's Burden etc. 1 v. — The Backwater of Life, or Essays of a Literary Veteran 1 v.

Frances Mary Peard.

One Year 2 v. — The Rose-Garden 1 v. — Unawares 1 v. — Thorpe Regis 1 v. — A Winter Story 1 v. — A Madrigal, and other Stories 1 v. — Cartouche 1 v. — Mother Molly 1 v. — Schloss and Town 2 v. — Contradictions 2 v. — Near Neighbours 1 v. — Alicia Tenant 1 v. — Madame's Granddaughter 1 v. — Donna Teresa 1 v.

Max Pemberton.

The Impregnable City 1 v. — A Woman of Kronstadt 1 v. — The Phantom Army 1 v. — The Garden of Swords 1 v.

Bishop Thomas Percy, † 1811.
 Reliques of Ancient English Poetry 3 v.

F. C. Philips.

As in a Looking Glass 1 v. — The Dean and his Daughter 1 v. — Lucy Smith 1 v. — A Lucky Young Woman 1 v. — Jack and Three Jills 1 v. — Little Mrs. Murray 1 v. — Young Mr. Ainslie's Courtship 1 v. — Social Vicissitudes 1 v. — Extenuating Circumstances, and A French Marriage 1 v. — More Social Vicissitudes 1 v. — Constance 2 v. — That Wicked Mad'moiselle, etc. 1 v. — A Doctor in Difficulties, etc. 1 v. — Black and White 1 v. — "One Never Knows" 2 v. — Of Course 1 v. — Miss Ormerod's Protégé 1 v. — My little Husband 1 v. — Mrs. Bouverie 1 v. — A Question of Colour, and other Stories 1 v. — A Devil in Nun's Veiling 1 v. — A Full Confession, and other Stories 1 v. — The Luckiest of Three 1 v. — Poor Little Balla 1 v.

F. C. Philips & Percy Fendall.
 A Daughter's Sacrifice 1 v. — Margaret Byng 1 v.

F. C. Philips & C. J. Wills.

The Fatal Phryne 1 v. — The Scudamores 1 v. — A Maiden Fair to See 1 v. — Sybil Ross's Marriage 1 v.

Eden Phillpotts.

Lying Prophets 2 v. — The Human Boy 1 v.

Miss Piddington, *vide* Author of "The Last of the Cavaliers."

Edgar Allan Poe (Am.), † 1849.
Poems and Essays, edited with a new
Memoir by John H. Ingram 1 v. — Tales,
edited by John H. Ingram 1 v.

Alexander Pope, † 1744.
Select Poetical Works (with Portrait) 1 v.

Miss E. Frances Poynter.
My Little Lady 2 v. — Erasilia 2 v. —
Among the Hills 1 v. — Madame de
Presnel 1 v.

Mrs. Campbell Praed.
Zéro 1 v. — Affinities 1 v. — The Head
Station 2 v.

Mrs. E. Prentiss (Am.), † 1878.
Stepping Heavenward 1 v.

The Prince Consort, † 1861.
His Principal Speeches and Addresses
(with Portrait) 1 v.

Richard Pryce.
Miss Maxwell's Affections 1 v. — The
Quiet Mrs. Fleming 1 v. — Time and the
Woman 1 v.

Hor. N. Pym, *vide* Caroline Fox.

Q (A. T. Quiller-Couch).
Noughts and Crosses 1 v. — I Saw Three
Ships 1 v. — Dead Man's Rock 1 v. — Ia
and other Tales 1 v. — The Ship of Stars
1 v.

H. M. the Queen, *vide* Victoria R. I.
W. Fraser Rac.

Westward by Rail 1 v. — Miss Bayle's
Romance 2 v. — The Business of Travel 1 v.

C. E. Raimond (Miss Robins).
The Open Question 2 v.

Author of "The Rajah's Heir."
The Rajah's Heir 2 v.

Charles Reade, † 1884.
"It is never too late to mend" 2 v. —
"Love me little, love me long" 1 v. —
The Cloister and the Hearth 2 v. — Hard
Cash 3 v. — Put Yourself in his Place 2 v. —
A Terrible Temptation 2 v. — Peg Wof-
fington 1 v. — Christie Johnstone 1 v. —
A Simpleton 2 v. — The Wandering Heir
1 v. — A Woman-Hater 2 v. — Rediana
1 v. — Singleheart and Doubleface 1 v.

Author of "Recommended to
Mercy" (Mrs. Houstoun).
"Recommended to Mercy" 2 v. —
Zoe's "Brand" 2 v.

Mrs. Reeves, *vide* Helen Mathers.
Grace Rhys.
Mary Dominic 1 v.

James Rice, *vide* Walter Besant.

Alfred Bate Richards, † 1876.
So very Human 3 v.

S. Richardson, † 1761.
Clarissa Harlowe 4 v.

Mrs. Riddell (F. G. Trafford).
George Geith of Fen Court 2 v. — Max-
well Drewitt 2 v. — The Race for Wealth
2 v. — Far above Rubies 2 v. — The Earl's
Promise 2 v. — Mortomley's Estate 2 v.

Mrs. Anne Thackeray Ritchie, *vide*
Miss Thackeray.

Miss Roberts, *vide* Author of
"Mademoiselle Mori."

Rev. Frederick W. Robertson,
† 1853.
Sermons 4 v.

Miss Robins, *vide* Raimond.

F. Robinson, *vide* Author of "No
Church."

Charles H. Ross.
The Pretty Widow 1 v. — A London
Romance 2 v.

Martin Ross, *vide* Somerville.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, † 1882.
Poems 1 v. — Ballads and Sonnets 1 v.

"Roy Tellet."
The Outcasts 1 v. — A Draught of
Lethe 1 v. — Pastor and Prelate 2 v.

J. Ruffini, † 1881.
Lavinia 2 v. — Doctor Antonio 1 v. —
Lorenzo Benoni 1 v. — Vincenzo 2 v. —
A Quiet Nook in the Jura 1 v. — The
Paragreens on a Visit to Paris 1 v. —
Carlino, and other Stories 1 v.

W. Clark Russell.
A Sailor's Sweetheart 2 v. — The
"Lady Maud" 2 v. — A Sea Queen 2 v.

George W. E. Russell.
Collections and Recollections. By One
who has kept a Diary 2 v.

George Augustus Sala, † 1895.
The Seven Sons of Mammon 2 v.

John Saunders.

Israel Mort, Overman 2 v. — The Shipowner's Daughter 2 v. — A Noble Wife 2 v.

Katherine Saunders (Mrs. Cooper).
Joan Merryweather, and other Tales 1 v. — Gideon's Rock, and other Tales 1 v. — The High Mills 2 v. — Sebastian 1 v.

Col. Richard Henry Savage (Am.).
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